# COUNT St. BLANCARD.

FRONTISPIECE
COUNTESS S. BLANCHARD & ELIZ.

# COUNT

# ST. BLANCARD,

## OR, THE

# Prejudiced Judge,

*A NOVEL.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

*BY MR. MEEK.*

VOL. I.

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# COUNT

# S^r. BLANCARD.

## CHAP. I.

RECIPROCAL friendſhip ſeldom exiſts (at leaſt in a ſtrong degree) between ſuperiors and inferiors. High birth, particular when attended by riches, draws crowds of flatterers round the favoured mortal, but ſeldom procures them a true friend. A man of equal birth and fortune, is often kept at a

diſtance through jealouſy, or the oſtentatious diſplay the other makes of his riches: and an equal, in point of fortune, is ſometimes looked upon as an inferior, if he is not bleſt with a title.

The foundation of true friendſhip ſhould be laid early in life, before the pride, uſually attendant upon high birth, is awakened, for it to be ſincere, between people of unequal rank, and this ſeldom occurs.

But this hiſtory will furniſh a proof, that general rules are never without exceptions, and that friendſhip may prove ſincere and permanent, even between men of very different rank in the world, provided they are both good characters; for the leagues of the wicked don't deſerve the ſacred name of friendſhip.

The Marquis D'Elcour, though the only remaining ſcion of one of the moſt ancient families in Picardy, was totally free from that

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ſort of pride which ſo often characterizes high birth, particularly in France. His only ſtudy, from the moment he became ſenſible of his rank, was to prove himſelf worthy of the noble blood which flowed in his veins. He profeſſed the moſt tender affection for a young man, of the name of Dubois, who, in fact, was merely deficient in point of birth, as he poſſeſſed every other qualification, to make him eſteemed and beloved by all who were acquainted with him.

But his father was unfortunately of a profeſſion, by no means honourable in France, though very lucrative. He was the ſon of an apothecary, named Rhubarbin, an appellation the old man had adopted, to pleaſe his wife, as his family name was the ſame as his ſon's.

It muſt be obſerved, that this ſtrict union had taken place between the young Marquis and Dubois, at an age when they were both totally ignorant of the diſtinction of

rank, &c. &c. and they became intimate friends through a ſimilarity of diſpoſitions.

The hotel the Marquis's father inhabited, was very near Mr. Rhubarbin's ſhop, and the nurſes of the two children were great friends, and often viſited one another with their reſpective charges; ſo from the time they could ſpeak, the young folks grew attached to each other, and this early friendſhip acquired ſuch a ſolidity, that it even increaſed, after they became ſenſible of the immenſe diſtance birth had placed between them, and was greatly ſtrengthened as they grew up, by a thouſand generous proofs of attachment, which the Marquis received from Dubois, who was by no means actuated by any deſire of paying his court to the young nobleman; he merely followed the impulſe of his heart, when he ſtrove to pleaſe and oblige him. They were both ſent to ſchool at the ſame time, and Dubois, who was the idol of his father, eaſily prevailed upon him to allow him to accompany his juvenile friend to the

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ſame academy, and there he found more opportunities than ever, of diſplaying his native generoſity and love for the Marquis.

The Apothecary was immenſely rich, though he was renowned for his economy; in fact, he hardly ever ſpent one tenth of his income, to which he added very conſiderably every year, by the profits of his trade. He employed a vaſt many journeymen, and always uſed the beſt and deareſt drugs, which procured him an honourable reputation, and a conſiderable trade; he was remarkably attentive and aſſiduous in his buſineſs, and this, joined to his known probity and prudence, had acquired him the confidence and eſteem of the publick in general; he was preferred to a phyſician by many, and was uſually ſent for upon all conſultations: in ſhort, the moſt eminent phyſicians themſelves had ſo high an opinion of his judgment, that they paid greater attention to his advice, than to that of ſeveral of their own fraternity.

Rhubarbin had but this one child, whom he abſolutely idoliſed, and if in general he was economical, nay, almoſt avaricious, he was generous, nay, even proſuſe, in every thing which concerned his ſon, as he not only gave him a moſt excellent education, at a very great expence, but ſatisfied every deſire or wiſh the young man could form. This unbounded indulgence might have had very pernicious effects upon the minds of ſome children, but Dubois gratefully felt it, and very properly appreciated it, and only tried, by every means in his power, to render himſelf more worthy ſuch unbounded proofs of his father's attachment; for though he never denied himſelf any reaſonable pleaſure, he behaved with ſuch prudence and modeſty, that he was univerſally beloved and reſpected by all his companions, and particularly ſo by the Marquis D'Elcour, whoſe high birth was his ſole poſſeſſion. His father had been very rich, but had entirely diſſipated an immenſe fortune before he died, and this young nobleman would have found himſelf in a very unenviable

unenviable ſituation, if the Marchioneſs, his mother, had not married a very rich man, at the expiration of her mourning for his father, by which means ſhe was enabled to bring him up in a ſtyle ſuitable to his rank in life.

The death of the Marquis, her firſt huſband, was followed by the ſale of all his eſtates, ſeven; the produce of them was inſufficient to pay his numerous debts.

Her ſecond huſband had been an acquaintance of the late Marquis's, and happened to be one of his principal creditors, of courſe, he had often opportunities of converſing with the widow. He was a maſter of the Court of Requeſts, a man of unblemiſhed character, and amazing property; his name was De Ceare. He was ſoon ſtruck with the beauty and merit of the young Marchioneſs, and did all in his power to ſettle her affairs to her ſatisfaction; he not only gave up his own debt, but tried to prevail, though without ſucceſs, upon the other creditors, to make

ſome proviſion for the unfortunate Marchioneſs, and her infant ſon; but his generous efforts having been ineffectual, the Marchioneſs was reduced to a very ſmall annuity, upon which it was hardly poſſible to ſubſiſt with decency, much leſs to live in a ſtyle ſuitable to her rank.

Monſieur De Ceare was perfectly conſcious of this, and wiſhing to repair, as much as poſſible, the injuſtice of fortune towards this amiable woman, as ſoon as decency permitted him, he made her an offer of his hand and fortune.

The Marchioneſs was exceſſively ſurpriſed at this unexpected offer, as all her late friends ſeemed to have forgot ſhe even exiſted, and this very Monſieur De Ceare had been a conſiderable loſer through her late huſband's exceſſive diſſipation. She could not ſay ſhe loved him, yet he bore ſo excellent a character, that ſhe concluded, by thinking it a very advantageous offer, notwithſtanding her ſuperior

rior rank, youth, and beauty; but Monſieur De Ceare's promiſes to ſuperintend the education of the young Marquis, and to treat him as an only ſon, had more effect upon her than any other thing he urged in his favour; and as her ſituation was far, far from agreeable, ſhe did not heſitate long, but ſoon made the Magiſtrate the happieſt of men, by accepting his hand, and never had the ſlighteſt reaſon to repent the ſtep ſhe had taken, almoſt through neceſſity, for Monſieur De Ceare, from the moment they were united, began to look upon the Marquis as his ſon, and to treat him accordingly; and his love for his amiable wife increaſed daily.

Madame De Ceare ſoon found ſhe was going to increaſe his family, this idea rather diſtreſt her, as ſhe was fearful that this child might prove a dangerous rival to the young Marquis, in the good graces of her huſband; but ſhe very ſoon had the felicity to diſcover her apprehenſions were unfounded, as the proſpect of having children of his own, by no

means diminiſhed Mr. De Ceare's love for the Marquis.

In about a twelve month after they were married, Madame De Ceare laid in of a daughter, which added greatly to Mr. De Ceare's love for her, and by no means diminiſhed that he bore the Marquis. She was therefore now perfectly happy, beloved by her huſband, and adored by her children. She ſeemed to enjoy every bleſſing this world afforded, but ſuch felicity is rarely permanent, a violent fever ſeized her in the midſt of her happy proſpects, which terminated her exiſtence, notwithſtanding the utmoſt efforts of the moſt eminent phyſicians to ſave her. She left only this daughter by Mr. De Ceare, who was in the twelfth year, and the Marquis, who was juſt turned of ſeventeen. Upon her death-bed, her ſon alone occupied her thoughts; though equally fond of her daughter, ſhe was not ſo uneaſy about her future welfare, but ſhe felt, that when ſhe died, her ſon would loſe a powerful friend, though

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ſhe was convinced Mr. De Ceare, who 'till then had never made any diſtinction between them, would never abandon him; yet if he was unfortunate enough to diſoblige his father-in-law, he might be reduced to very great poverty; for though ſhe had it in her power to have made a trifling proviſion for him, ſhe would not have thought herſelf juſtified in ſo doing, after the proofs ſhe had had of Mr. De Ceare's generoſity; however, ſhe did not endeavour to conceal from her huſband, her fears reſpecting her ſon.

Mr. De Ceare entreated her to make herſelf perfectly eaſy, proteſting he would always look upon him as his ſon; would never alter his conduct towards him. Theſe aſſurances, as ſhe was convinced of their ſincerity, made her exceſſively happy. She alſo exacted a promiſe from her daughter, that ſhe would become the protectreſs of her brother, in caſe her father ever abandoned him, or ever married again. This aſſurance ſhe eaſily obtained, as Mademoiſelle de Ceare adored

her mother, and was remarkably attached to the Marquis; theſe comforting ideas ſoftened the laſt moments of this amiable woman's life; ſhe died the day after, extremely regretted by the whole family, and all who were acquainted with her, for ſhe was univerſally beloved.

Time and reaſon, alleviated the ſorrow of the magiſtrate, who reſolved never to marry again, as a mark of the real veneration he paid her memory, but to employ his future life in finiſhing the education of her children, as he really was more than ever attached to the Marquis; he provided a proper governeſs for his daughter, (a part the Marchioneſs had taken upon herſelf) as he preferred keeping her under his own eye, to ſending her into a convent, where there is uſually much more attention paid to the birth and riches of the pupils, than to their education. The young Marquis returned to the ſchool he had been at ſince he was ten years old, for a few months longer, upon the ſame footing he al-

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ways had been; yet D'Elcour found a vaſt diminution in his pocket money, clothes, &c. ſince his mother's death; he certainly wanted for nothing eſſential, but a father ſeldom thinks of the ſame indulgences a mother does, he therefore found himſelf deprived of a hundred little things he had been uſed to, which his father-in-law was not even aware of, though the Marquis ſeverely felt the loſs of them: and he would now often have been in want of money, if his friend Dubois's purſe had not always been open to him; the latter eaſily perceived the privations the Marquis experienced, and always contrived to oblige his friend to accept of his offers, without wounding his delicacy, of courſe the Marquis's attachment towards Dubois increaſed daily; he now began to feel the ſuperiority of the young Apothecary's merit, (which was generally acknowledged by all their ſchool-fellows) and far from being envious of it, it only increaſed his attachment towards his generous friend, who was by this time at the head of the academy. To great natural

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parts, and a very cultivated underſtanding, Dubois joined a moſt elegant figure; he was rather tall, remarkably well made, and his face was almoſt too handſome for his ſex, though by no means effeminate; his manners were eaſy and graceful; in ſhort, he ſeemed born to fill a more diſtinguiſhed place in ſociety, than his birth intitled him to, therefore he was, in every ſenſe of the word, a moſt accompliſhed young man; he was brave to an exceſs, gay, without being either wild or diſſipated, and very learned, but totally free from pedantry: added to theſe qualities, he was exceſſively diffident of his own merit, and never forgot his humble origin, though he lived upon the moſt familiar terms with ſeveral of the young nobility, his ſchool fellows, who were all exceſſively fond of him, and always treated him as an equal. His ſound ſenſe, and excellent heart, prevented him from priding himſelf upon the immenſe fortune he was one day likely to poſſeſs, though there were moments when his ignoble birth occaſioned him ſome diſagreeable reflections,

ſlections, and he was ſometimes almoſt tempted to murmur againſt that providence, which had placed him in ſo low a ſtation; but he always kept theſe humiliating thoughts to himſelf, never mentioning them even to his moſt confidential friend, the Marquis D'Elcour, who was alſo exceedingly amiable; and as emulation reigned inſtead of jealouſy, between theſe two young men, they were each ardent in their deſire to become more worthy of each other's love. This idea led them both on towards perfection in the different ſciences they were ſtudying.

Dubois's greateſt ambition, was a wiſh to illuſtrate his name by his martial deeds, but his father intended him for a phyſician, though the young man felt a decided repugnance for that profeſſion, and wiſhed moſt ardently to enter into the army; but in vain had he propoſed that ſcheme to the Apothecary, though his only wiſh was to oblige his darling ſon, ſtill he always oppoſed his taking ſuch a ſtep; they debated the point very often, and Mr. Rhubarbin's

Rhubarbin's objections were certainly reasonable. Soldiers are not wanted at present, he would say, France is at peace with all her neighbours, a circumstance, he presumed, his son had not thought of; I know, he went on, your large fortune might procure you an advantageous post in the army, but even then, you would not be of any service to your country, except in time of war, and you might grow old before you had it in your power to immortalize the name of Dubois; and was I to consent to your wish, only reflect how often you might be exposed in a garrison town, particularly to disagreeable adventures, as almost all the young men who hold any distinguished posts in our army, are men of very high rank, who would not let any opportunity escape, of reminding you of your birth, and of your father's profession; now my reputation, as an apothecary, will be of infinite service to you in the line I intend you for, but can only hurt you as an officer, for were you to attain any high rank, it would be better for you my name had never been mentioned

mentioned in the great world, which I flatter myſelf it often has, with eſteem.

During this ſpeech, Dubois ſat ſilent, and was unable to reply, as his own ſenſe convinced him of the truth and juſtice of his father's arguments, he therefore very wiſely relinquiſhed all ideas of ſerving his country in the military line; and ſome days afterwards, having previouſly reflected, that his birth would not prevent him from riſing in the law, he preſt his father to allow him to chooſe that profeſſion, aſſuring him he would devote every moment of his time to the ſtudy of it, in hopes of advancing ſpeedily.

Rhubarbin had never been half ſo much puzzled at any conſultation, as he was now to anſwer his ſon, whom he ſincerely wiſhed to oblige, but the more he reflected, the more inflexible he became upon this point; he could not give up his favourite plan; they argued ſome time upon this matter, but Mr. Rhubarbin ſaid, at laſt, he abſolutely would not

not conſent to what, were he ſo inclined, might induce his ſon to look down with diſdain, upon the profeſſion of his father; he might follow whatever profeſſion he choſe after his death, but he would never allow him to embrace either of thoſe he had mentioned, during his life time, adding, that he might illuſtrate his name ſufficiently as a phyſician, bringing himſelf for an example in his own line, ſaying, "he had got forward, and become celebrated, with far leſs proſpects than he would have, the name of Dubois was already eſtabliſhed, and he had only to diſtinguiſh himſelf by his ſcience, and his aſſiduity, as he had done, aſſuring him, that no profeſſion could be more honourable, than one that was ſo uſeful to the public in general."

Dubois, at laſt, finding Mr. Rhubarbin's reſolution unalterable, ſubmitted to his commands with a good grace, and endeavoured to conquer the repugnance he felt for the profeſſion he ſo ardently wiſhed him to embrace. The old man, by way of encouragement, re-

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preſented to him he would be in a much higher line than he was, and pointed out to him all the advantages of his profeſſion, and the high eſtimation a good phyſician was held in.

Dubois made no reply, and ſoon after quitted ſchool, and went to college to commence the ſtudies proper to make himſelf celebrated in the line he was obliged to follow. He ſtudied early and late, determined to be at the head of his profeſſion, his ſucceſs equalled his aſſiduity, and at twenty he left college, only deficient in experience, to equal his greateſt cotemporaries in the phyſical line.

The Marquis left ſchool rather before his friend; they ſeparated with great reluctance, and he had ſpent the two years his friend had paſſed at college, at a military academy, but about the time Dubois returned to his father's, Mr. De Ceare put the young Marquis into the army.

Dubois

Dubois continued his ſtudies to great advantage, under his father's eye; he employed his leiſure hours in muſic and painting, two arts he had always been paſſionately fond of when at ſchool. The pains he had taken during his reſidence at college—the proofs he gave his father of his skill in the profeſſion he intended him for, pleaſed Mr. Rhubarbin vaſtly, and convinced him how much his ſon wished to oblige him: he was therefore exceſſively happy on all accounts, firſt, to find Dubois ſo reſigned to his wiſhes, and in the ſecond place, to perceive, he only ſought diſſipation in the cultivation of the fine arts, of which he was alſo very fond, though he had not the leaſt tincture of them.

Dubois's different occupations, inſpired him with a great taſte for ſolitude; he ſpent the greateſt part of his time in his ſtudy, where his books, his pencil, and his muſical inſtruments, afforded him ample employment.

Though

Though the Marquis D'Fleour had embraced a very different profeſſion, he was ſtill very partial to the young phyſician, they often ſaw one another, indeed, Dubois ſeldom viſited any body elſe. His father, at laſt, often complained of the retired life he led, and wiſhed him to try more diſſipation, in which he was heartily ſeconded by the Marquis; but Dubois told them both, the profeſſion he was deſtined for, required a great deal of ſtudy and attention, and it was impoſſible for him to hope, ever to be celebrated in it, if he did not ſacrifice his whole time to attain a perfect knowledge of it. Another motive, which he did not explain, was joined to the pretext he gave his father and his friend, for the ſolitary life he led.

His father's friends, and uſual ſociety, by no means ſuited his taſte; their converſation, which chiefly rolled upon different frivolous ſtories, concerning the neighbourhood they lived in, did not amuſe him, nor did he chooſe to mix with the new acquaintance the

the Marquis D'Elcour had formed, not wishing to appear the leaſt in company, and from a diſlike he had to viſiting people above himſelf. The Marquis D'Elcour was his beſt friend, but his preſent companions might not ſee Dubois, he very juſtly thought, with the ſame partial eyes he did. Theſe laſt reaſons confined him to his father's houſe much more than his ſtudies; be that as it may, he ſpent his whole time in peruſing the moſt celebrated authors, in viſiting all the hoſpitals, and every place where he was likely to obtain knowledge in his profeſſion, and in cultivating his two favourite amuſements. Every day he examined the different preſcriptions that were ſent to his father's ſhop, and always inquired into the different diſorders that had occaſioned them, and which they were meant to remove; he then reaſoned with his father upon the abſurdity of many of them, and wondered the conſtitutions of ſeveral of the patients were not ruined by the attempts of their Phyſicians to cure, or at

leaſt to alleviate diſorders, they often increaſed.

Rhubarbin perfectly agreed with him, but ſaid "he was obliged to follow, blindly, the orders he received from the faculty, if he was not conſulted."

"That was very juſt," Dubois ſaid, "but whenever he practiſed, he was determined to act upon other, and leſs intereſted principles, than he obſerved the diſciples of Galen did in general."

Thus Mr. Rhubarbin's ſhop furniſhed him with freſh obſervations every day, and very uſeful one's, as it was attended by all the firſt people.

Mr. Rhubarbin, though of an economical turn, as has been obſerved, was very charitable in his way, and frequently gave his advice and medicine gratis, and a day ſeldom paſſed, that he did not viſit ſome ſick poor. Dubois

now

now begged leave to accompany him upon theſe occaſions, that he might judge of his ſkill. The old gentleman readily conſented, highly flattered by the requeſt, and ſtill more ſo, by the knowledge his ſon diſplayed in every diſorder; he always entreated him to preſcribe, and had the further ſatisfaction to find his medicines, though in general very ſimple, very efficacious. He was therefore now convinced, that his ſon would be an ornament to the profeſſion he intended him for. During a twelvemonth, Dubois practiſed thus among the poor and needy, and was often called in by his father's friends, but he never accepted a fee, always ſaying, he was not eſtabliſhed, did not deſerve the name of a Phyſician, yet that he only practiſed for glory at firſt.

At the end of this twelve month, he told Mr. Rhubarbin he ſhould like to ſpend ſome time at Montpelier, having a very high opinion of their college of Phyſicians. Mr. Rhubarbin inſtantly conſented to his propoſal, ſaying,

ſaying, "it was an excellent notion, and he was convinced he would derive great benefit from his journey; he foreſaw he would ſoon be at the head of his profeſſion, and aſſured him, he ſhould always comply with any requeſt likely to bring him forward in it."

Dubois, therefore, very ſoon ſet off for the place of his deſtination, where he remained near two years, at the end of which he returned to Paris, and after having paid his reſpects to his father, who was overjoyed to ſee him, he ſet out to viſit his friend D'Elcour, who was then in Paris, and with whom he had correſponded very regularly. The Marquis received him with the greateſt joy; but though he appeared exceſſively happy at ſeeing ſo dear a friend, after ſuch an abſence, Dubois perceived he was in very low ſpirits, and looked as if he had been ill; he inſtantly aſked him what was the matter, taking his hand very tenderly, while his countenance diſplayed the greateſt anxiety for his health and welfare.

The Marquis aſſured him he was very well, but he had been very uneaſy for ſome time, about his ſiſter, Mademoiſelle de Ceare.

"Good heavens!" ſays Dubois, evidently ſurpriſed, "how long has ſhe been ill? what is her complaint? why did not you inform me of it in your kind letter?"

"I was convinced it would have afforded you very little ſatisfaction, my dear friend," ſays the Marquis, "had you known I was unhappy; ſhe is in a deep decline, and there are hardly any hopes now, that ſhe will ever recover: ſhe has had the advice of all our firſt Phyſicians, but has not met with any relief; ſhe is therefore tired of medicine, and is now gone into the country, as the laſt reſource the Phyſicians having quite given her over, though they ſaid change of air might be of ſervice to her."

The Marquis, who was remarkably attached to his ſiſter, could hardly reſtrain his tears during

during this recital, which affected Dubois very much, who was acquainted with his friend's sincere brotherly attachment to Mademoiselle de Ceare, and knew of what service she had often been to him, and should the magistrate lose her, it was not improbable he might marry again, which would render the situation of the Marquis, who was totally dependant upon him, still more disagreeable than it now was, since he had a most ardent friend in this amiable girl. These were Dubois's reflections, who only wished he knew how he could serve his friend.

He was just returned from the most famous place in all Europe, for the cure of this particular disorder, he therefore flattered himself, his prescriptions might be of service to the young lady; at all events he could but make the trial, he therefore determined to offer himself for her Physician, to his friend; if Mademoiselle de Ceare was given over, his reputation ran no risk, and should he be fortunate enough to remove her disorder, he

ſhould particularly ſerve and oblige his friend, and at the ſame time raiſe his own fame. He was very minute in his inquiries concerning her complaint, and formed ſome hopes, therefore, by way of conſoling the Marquis, he told him he did not think his ſiſter's diſorder was abſolutely of ſo dangerous a nature as had been repreſented to him: Phyſicians were often miſtaken in their complaint, as well as in many others, and then inform'd him that he had been fortunate enough to re-eſtabliſh a lady's health during his reſidence at Montpelier, who was as far gone in a decline as Mademoiſelle de C'are was, by his account.

The Marquis, who had liſtened very attentively to his friend, ſtarted at this ſpeech, ſaying,

"Oh my dear Dubois, ſave my ſiſter then, if it is poſſible," taking him in his arms while he ſpoke.

"Well,

"Well, don't be too ſanguine, my Lord," ſays Dubois, "and I will do my endeavours, and if I am fortunate enough to reſtore Mademoiſelle de Ceare to her amiable brother, it will totally reconcile me to a profeſſion, I ſo unwillingly embraced."

"My beſt friend," ſays the Marquis, "my ſiſter will have great confidence in you, I am certain, becauſe ſhe knows how intimate we are; whether you are fortunate enough to ſucceed in your attempt or not, you will equally lay me under greater obligations than ever, though you have been eternally heaping favours upon me from a boy; but I ſhould never have dared to have made this propoſal to you, though I aſſure you I have the higheſt opinion of your talents, and I am ſure you think there are hopes, or you would not have flattered me, and mine are all revived. When can you go? ſhall we ſet off immediately? the moments are too precious, not to make me regret every one we loſe here."

Dubois, always willing to oblige his friend, entreated him to have a little patience, and he would accompany him that very evening, he alſo begged he would not put too much faith in what he had ſaid, for 'till he had ſeen the lady, he could not judge properly of her ſituation; he ought to recollect, ſhe had had the firſt advice, and he was not infallible; but he would inſtantly return to his father's, inform him where he was going, and take with him what medicines he thought might be neceſſary for the young lady, who was now at a ſeat of her father's, about ten miles from Paris.

The Marquis's tranſports were greatly damped, he ſeemed ſuſpended between hope and fear, but ordered his carriage to be got ready immediately, telling Dubois, he would call for him at his father's, that they might not loſe time.

Dubois had hardly reached home, and explained to Mr. Rhubarbin where he was going

going, before the Marquis arrived; the apothecary was ſure, if it was in the power of medicine to reſtore the young lady to her friends, his ſon would perform the cure; he was therefore as anxious in the buſineſs as the Marquis was; they therefore ſet off almoſt immediately, as Rhubarbin did not ſtart a ſingle objection, but raiſed the young Marquis's hopes to the greateſt pitch, ſo happy was he his ſon was going to exerciſe his favourite profeſſion, and ſo convinced he was of his ſkill and knowledge.

## CHAP. II.

IN little more than an hour they arrived at St. * * *, and found Mademoiſelle de Ceare in a ſituation that fully convinced Dubois, his friend had not exaggerated her diſorder, however, Mr. de Ceare, who was alſo in the country, received both D'Elcour, and his friend, with the utmoſt politeneſs, notwithſtanding heart felt grief was wrote very legibly upon his countenance. After the firſt introduction was over, D'Elcour, all impatience, begged to ſpeak with Mr. de Ceare in

in private; the moment they were alone, he told him more particularly who Dubois was; that he was juſt returned from Mountpellier, and the hopes he entertained, that he would be able to contribute, in a great meaſure, towards the recovery of his ſiſter.

Mr. de Ceare looked at D'Elcour, ſaying, "My dear boy, you are very good, but remember how we have been flattered; nothing leſs than a miracle can ſave her; I am convinced all thoſe eminent men I have employed, cannot be miſtaken, their great experience ——"

The Marquis interrupted him, with tears in his eyes, and entreated he would place ſome reliance in the ſkill of his friend.

The magiſtrate aſſured him, "if he could prevail upon his daughter to follow the young Phyſician's advice, he ſhould be very happy, but he was really afraid ſhe would neither ſee nor liſten to any more medical men, as ſhe

had not taken any medicines for the laſt week, and had declared ſhe never would again, as ſhe thought they did her more harm than good; however, let's return into the ſaloon, and I will try what effect my perſuaſions will have upon her."

The Marquis was exceſſively rejoiced to think he had brought his father-in-law into his way of thinking, and entertained great hopes, he would be able to overcome his ſiſter's diſlike to Phyſicians, and their uſual appendages.

Upon their joining Dubois, Mr. de Ceare was more than uſually polite to him, and thanked him in the moſt fervent terms for his kind viſit; was only afraid he was arrived too late, though he entertained the higheſt opinion of his ſkill, and the Marquis had informed him he had been ſtudying under the College of Phyſicians at Montpellier, who were renowned all over Europe for their ſucceſs

ſucceſs in the complaint his daughter laboured under.

Dubois's native diffidence, prevented him from ſaying any thing in his own praiſe, and Mr. de Ceare now begged leave to introduce him to his patient, they therefore all walked up ſtairs, into Mademoiſelle de Ceare's apartment; the Magiſtrate introduced the young Phyſician to her, with the moſt flattering praiſes of his abilities, adding, "he was certain, if ſhe placed any confidence in him, he would, at all events, greatly relieve her, and that he had every reaſon in the world to hope, he would abſolutely re-eſtabliſh her health."

D'Elcour joined his entreaties to his father's, ſaying, "he was ſure it would be an additional recommendation to her, to know her Phyſician was his moſt intimate friend."

Mademoiſelle de Ceare, who was ſitting upon a ſofa, not being able to riſe, ſaid,

with a charming ſmile, "her father and brother were too good to her; ſhe was very willing to do any thing, or to liſten to any body, if it would give them any ſatisfaction; but ſhe could not flatter herſelf, after the various remedies ſhe had tried, and ſhe really thought ſhe was better, ſince ſhe had left of taking any medicine."

Dubois approached her with a graceful bow, "hoped ſhe would put ſome little faith in his endeavours to reſtore her to health; for though he had not practiſed a great while, nor had not yet aſſumed a large wig, ſo neceſſary an appendage in his profeſſion, he had been fortunate enough to relieve many ladies, in as bad, if not more dangerous ſituations, than her's."

Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſaid, "ſhe was unable to expreſs her gratitude to her father and brother, for the trouble they continually gave themſelves about her."

She

She then thanked Dubois very politely, and aſſured him, "ſhe was convinced he would cure her, if any body could, but ſhe really did not think any thing would be of ſervice to her now."

As the firſt ſtep towards effecting a cure in this complaint, is to gain the good opinion of the patient, Dubois ſaid it was very wrong to give way to ſuch melancholy ideas: then took a chair, and ſeated himſelf near Mademoiſelle de Ceare, began to talk about his travels, and the different ridiculous incidents he had met with in the courſe of them. His ſtories were ſo well told, and ſo truly laughable, he ſoon raiſed Mademoiſelle de Ceare's ſpirits, and increaſed her good opinion of him at laſt.

"I ſee, madam," ſays he, "you have a very great averſion to us poor diſciples of Æſculapius, and I muſt allow, we are ſeldom pleaſant viſitors, but I believe we ſhould obtain the good graces of our patients oftener than

than we do, if we did not prescribe such nauseous medicines, and such quantities of them."

"I believe you are very right, sir," says Mademoiselle de Ceare, "you seem to speak feelingly."

"Madam," says Dubois, smiling, "and I am of opinion you have taken more drugs than were necessary, as you have found no benefit from them; but if you will allow me the honour of being your Physician in future, I will give you my word of honour, you shall not be troubled with much physick, and I will be answerable for your cure, if you will place any confidence in my art."

"That is saying a great deal indeed, sir," says the young lady, smiling in her turn, at the honest warmth with which he spoke. Mr. de Ceare's countenance brightened, and the Marquis was all animation, while he joined in her father's, and his friends entreaties, that she would put herself under his care.

"I perceive,"

"I perceive," ſays ſhe, "I muſt break my reſolutions; you all with me to live, and I aſſure you I have no deſire to die, but I cannot take any more drugs."

Dubois aſſured her ſhe ſhould not.

"Then I will be totally guided by your orders, ſir, to oblige my father and brother, for whoſe ſake, more than my own, I wiſh to recover."

They both thanked her very tenderly, and left her to compoſe her ſpirits a little; and as Mr. de Ceare and the Marquis were very impatient to hear Dubois's real opinion of his lovely patient, which they hoped he would now give them, without reſerve; nor did he deceive them, he anſwered their inquiries thus:

"Mademoiſelle de Ceare was certainly very ill, that he could not abſolutely inſure a cure, notwithſtanding what he had ſaid to the young

young lady, whom he wiſhed to inſpire with hopes, might relieve her mind, and raiſe her ſpirits, which appeared to be uncommonly depreſt, but after he had attended her a week, and ſeen what effect his preſcriptions took, he ſhould be better able to ſatisfy them; he then told them he muſt be her Cook, as well as her Phyſician, but entreated ſhe might not be informed of it, for as ſhe had ſuch a decided averſion to all ſorts of drugs, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould take thoſe he hoped would facilitate her cure, without her knowing it, as he meant merely to give her very ſimple reſtoratives; he alſo deſired he might occupy a room near his patient, that he might be called when ever ſhe awoke, and wiſhed to take any nouriſhment; not that he meant to attend her in the night, which would only alarm her, and anſwer no one good end, but he wiſhed to prepare every thing ſhe took unknown to her."

The Magiſtrate, who felt all his hopes return, readily agreed to all Dubois's wiſhes, and who was therefore, by his own deſire, introduced

introduced to the houſe-keeper, as it was near ſupper time. He ordered what was proper for his patient, and preſided at the preparation, deſiring the nurſe who attended Mademoiſelle de Ceare, would inform him privately how her miſtreſs liked his firſt preſcriptions; and ſoon after ſupper the nurſe brought him word, that Mademoiſelle had praiſed the cook, and had not the ſlighteſt notion ſhe had taken any drugs with her meal. He had the further good fortune to find it had the deſired effect, as Mademoiſelle de Ceare did not wake 'till day break, when ſhe ſaid ſhe found herſelf very much refreſhed by her ſleep. The nurſe went and informed Dubois what ſhe had ſaid, &c. &c. as he had ordered her, and carried her patient ſome drink he had prepared, after which ſhe fell aſleep once more, and did not wake 'till eight o'clock in the morning.

The report of the excellent night ſhe had paſt, was received with great joy by the whole

whole houſhold, for ſhe was univerſally adored.

Mr. de Ceare went into her room, as ſoon as ſhe was up, to inquire how ſhe did; ſhe aſſured him ſhe had ſlept ſounder and better than ſhe had for ſome time; ſhe could not tell whether her repoſe was owing to any thing her Phyſician had given her, but if it was, his remedies were very ſimple indeed.

Her father told her, ſhe certainly could not attribute it to any thing elſe, and from ſuch a proof of Mr. Dubois's ſkill, he hoped ſhe would ſtrictly adhere to his orders; ſhe promiſed ſhe would, and aſſured her father, ſhe felt her faith in the faculty return; ſhe certainly mended every day, and Dubois was now idolized in the family, and every one entertained, and very juſtly, the higheſt opinion of his medical ſkill. He ſpent the greateſt part of his time in his patient's room, when ſhe was up, and could ſee company, and his agreeable converſation greatly contributed

tributed to reſtore her to health: in ſhort, Mademoiſelle de Ceare found ſhe gained ſtrength daily, and told Dubois, at the end of a fortnight, when her father and brother were preſent, ſhe did not think ſhe ſhould die, which ſhe really did when he was firſt introduced to her; her father and brother both expreſſed their joy in the ſtrongeſt terms, only hoped ſhe would continue the regimen her ſaviour, as they both called Dubois, had preſcribed for her, 'till he permitted her to leave it off.

"Undoubtedly," ſhe ſaid, "ſhe felt too much benefit from the effects of it, to withdraw her confidence from her Phyſician," and addreſſing him, aſked him what ſhe had been taking, for ſhe never perceived it had any taſte, but he had done very right to treat her like a child, for ſhe knew ſhe had been taken in.

He laughed, and told her, "he could not diſcloſe the ſecrets of his profeſſion, the greateſt

greateſt proof of ſkill a Phyſician could give, was to diſguiſe his preſcriptions, ſo as not to diſguſt his patient's palate; he only hoped ſhe would ſtill do him the honour to allow him to exert his talents in that way."

"Oh, very willingly," ſhe ſaid, and thus ended the converſation.

At the end of another fortnight, Dubois ſaid, "ſhe would ſoon be able to join the party below ſtairs."

Mr. de Ceare and the Marquis had often aſked Dubois privately, "whether he could not pronounce her totally out of danger, as they were convinced ſhe was a vaſt deal better."

He always told them he had every reaſon to hope ſhe was, but he could not foreſee what any changes that might take place would occaſion; however, at the end of another week ſhe was ſo much recovered, that every

every one of them were convinced ſhe would ſoon be reſtored to her former health: the whole houſe was overjoyed when they found their charming miſtreſs was out of danger: none felt the bleſſing more than the Magiſtrate, who was dearingly fond of his daughter, and he now ſaw her ſnatch'd from the grave, as one may ſay, at a time he thought himſelf certain of loſing her for ever; he was at a loſs for words to expreſs his gratitude towards Dubois, he therefore conſulted the Marquis, entreating him to inform him what he could offer his friend as a recompence for the ſingular ſervice he had done him.

The Marquis told him he was certain his friend had not been guided by any intereſted motives, in what he had done, and that he found himſelf ſufficiently repaid by his ſucceſs; beſides, he was certain he would be affronted at the bare mention of a pecuniary reward, which he was much ſuperior to, nay, he had frequently told him, he hardly knew whether we ſhould ever practiſe for any thing more

more than amuſement; therefore, Mr. de Ceare had no other means of acquitting himſelf for ſo eminent a ſervice, but by ſhewing the young Phyſician the utmoſt reſpect and politeneſs.

While all this happy family were enjoying Mademoiſelle de Ceare's unexpected reſtoration to health, we may ſuppoſe ſhe was not leſs ſenſible of the bleſſing, though ſhe appeared to poſſeſs a firmneſs, unuſual at ſo early an age, when ſhe thought herſelf dying; yet ſhe felt herſelf exceſſively happy, when Dubois pronounced her out of danger. The rank in life ſhe held, and the immenſe fortune ſhe was likely to poſſeſs, were ſufficient to make a perſon of her age regret the obligation ſhe thought herſelf under, of relinquiſhing all her expected pleaſures at once: what is more natural than to find one's ſelf attached to a world, that only offers us brilliant proſpects, and at ſo early an age as ſeventeen. However, ſhe kept all her diſagreeable reflections to herſelf, when ſhe thought herſelf in the

greateſt danger, as ſhe did not wiſh to augment the ſorrows of thoſe around her, but not having the ſame reaſon to diſſimulate the joy ſhe felt upon finding herſelf reſtored to health and beauty; ſhe unaffectedly gave way to it, ſaying, ſhe ſhould make her benefactor ſuppoſe her ungrateful, was ſhe to appear indifferent to the reſtoration of a life, ſhe owed abſolutely to his care and ſkill.

Monſieur de Cerre's friends and acquaintance, who frequently viſited him at St. * * *, beſtowed the higheſt encomiums upon the profound knowledge of the young Phyſician, and only wiſhed he would begin to practiſe, as they all promiſed him their protection.

Dubois thanked them all very politely, and received all their compliments with the greateſt modeſty.

He joined to his other perfections a lively imagination, and a great deal of ready wit, when he choſe to give way to the natural gaiety

gaiety of his diſpoſition, which made him a moſt agreeable companion.

Mr. de Ceare, who felt himſelf more than ever attached to the Marquis, for the proofs of fraternal love he had given his daughter, was always thanking him for having brought his friend to her aſſiſtance, profeſſing he had never been more ſurpriſed, than to find ſo young a man, in poſſeſſion of ſuch vaſt knowledge.

Madam de Ceare gained ſtrength daily, and very often, now, took the benefit of the air in the morning, and in the afternoon ſhe generally had a party in her own room; ſhe was paſſionately fond of muſick; a young lady, who for ſome time had reſided with her as a companion, beſides her governeſs, ſung remarkably well; the Marquis and Dubois were alſo excellent muſicians, particularly the latter, and theſe little concerts contributed greatly to reſtore the health and ſpirits of the charming invalid: in ſhort, at the end of two months,

months, by the care of the Phyſician, and the efforts of all around her, it might be ſaid ſhe was perfectly recovered; her blooming cheeks ſoon began to announce the return of health; ſhe was exceſſively beautiful, even when ſhe was ill, for her complexion was one of thoſe, that in all ſituations, never fails to intereſt you, but her charms now glowed with additional luſtre, and ſoon convinced Dubois, that he was intereſted in her perfect reſtoration; now, for his own ſake, though ſhe owed his firſt viſit to his regard to his friend; at firſt he merely thought he felt a ſentiment of pity for the beauteous invalid, but he now diſcovered his heart had fallen a ſacrifice to that beauty he had ſo ſucceſsfully reſtored; he began to find he was never happy, but in her company; however, for ſome time he merely attributed his tender ſentiments to the vanity he felt, upon having performed ſuch a wonderful cure; but he ſoon found himſelf miſtaken; "What am I about?" ſays he, "am I what will be the end of this?" and ſoon came to a reſolution to ſtifle this preſumptuous

love in its birth; but he found this a more difficult taſk than the cure he had performed; he examined his heart thoroughly, and blamed himſelf very much, for having let this tender, though involuntary ſentiment, gain ſuch an aſcendency over him; he determined therefore to ſet out for Paris, he was no longer of any uſe, and he was only ſorry he had not come to this reſolution ſooner; his mind was ſo occupied, he could not reſt all night, and the next morning, at breakfaſt, he mentioned his intention, which was immediately vehemently oppoſed by all preſent.

Mr. de Ceare entreated him, in the moſt earneſt manner, to ſtay a little longer. The Marquis hoped he would not think of leaving them yet, for fear of a relapſe, which would tarniſh all the glory he had obtained by this wonderful cure. Mademoiſelle de Ceare's governeſs and companion, both joined their entreaties; his abſence might expoſe them to loſe all the fruits of his ſkill; but all theſe ſolicitations, which he merely looked upon as matters

matters of courſe, would not have prevented his departure, if Mademoiſelle de Ceare herſelf, had not preſſed him to ſtay.

"I perceive," ſays ſhe, "my friends entreaties won't prevail upon you to oblige us, ſir; you have ſet me upon my feet once more, and now you think I can go alone."

Her eyes convinced him, more than her ſpeech, of the regret ſhe felt upon hearing him mention his departure; he looked at her, unable to ſpeak; what ſacrifice would not he have made, to gratify every wiſh ſhe could form.

D'Elcour ſaid, "he was certain he was not wanted at Paris;" he acknowledged he was not particularly.

"Then would not you reproach yourſelf, ſir," ſays Mademoiſelle de Ceare, "where you to loſe all the fruits of your labour, if I ſhould have a return of my diſorder after your

departure, perhaps you would not be able to recover me again, and then I am ſure you would be angry with yourſelf, for not having complied with our entreaties. Now if you won't grant this favour to my fears for my own ſafety, why then do it to oblige my father and brother. The Marquis is come to ſpend ſix months with us, he has not been more than three at Paris, and at St. * * * yet; but I know if you return to Paris, he will accompany you, then I ſhall be left quite alone, and may die of ennui perhaps, inſtead of a decline."

Dubois's excellent reſolutions all vaniſhed before theſe repeated entreaties of Mademoiſelle de Ceare; her father and brother might have talked for a week to leſs effect, but to reſiſt ſuch a pleader, was impoſſible, he therefore promiſed to ſpend the autumn at St. * * *, in a word, to ſtay with them 'till they returned to Paris for the winter.

They

They all thanked him for his condeſcenſion, and only now thought of ſpending their time agreeably. — They were obliged, however, to confine all their pleaſures to domeſtick amuſements, for the Magiſtrate ſaw very little company in general; he had not ſent his daughter into a convent: it has been before obſerved, that he might be better able to ſuperintend her education himſelf, as well as her pleaſures, and the different acquaintance ſhe formed. When ſhe went into publick, which was very ſeldom, he always accompanied her, and took very great care ſhe ſhould form no connexions that might interfere with his latent views for her eſtabliſhment, or that might make her diſlike the ſort of confinement ſhe lived in; for though he was an excellent man, yet he had one failing, he was exceſſively proud, and his greateſt apprehenſions aroſe from his fears, that his daughter might fall in love beneath her rank, a thing he would hardly have forgiven, much as he adored her, and certainly would never have conſented to her marrying the moſt

amiable man in the world, if not her ſuperior, or at leaſt her equal, in point of birth.

He had a very elegant hotel at Paris, which had the advantage of a very large garden, the only place he ever allowed his daughter to take the air in; for though he allowed her to viſit the Theatre ſometimes, he would never have conſented to her appearing in any of the publick walks, ſuch as the Thuileries, Luxembourg, &c. even could he have accompanied her. It was moſt probably her retired life, which had brought on her complaint, but knowing her father's way of thinking, ſhe never repined at her confinement, nor ever aſked him to grant her a ſingle favour, ſhe thought it likely he might refuſe her. The reſtraint ſhe was under when at Paris, made her very partial to the country, as her confinement was by no means ſo rigorous at St. * * *, the ſeat they were now at.

The

The houſe was ſurrounded by a very fine park, in which ſhe was allowed to walk as much as ſhe pleaſed; indeed, the Magiſtrate had bought this villa, chiefly upon her account, becauſe ſhe was ſo partial to the country, for his place of maſter of the Court of Requeſts, would not allow him to be often abſent from Paris; but the gardens, park, &c. at St. * * *, were very magnificent, and he thought the air did her good, he therefore uſually brought her down in April, and ſeldom took her back to Paris 'till the latter end of October; but during this interval, he frequently viſited Paris himſelf. When any of his friends aſked him after his daughter, or blamed him for depriving them all ſo much of her ſociety, he ſeldom paid any attention to their diſcourſe. Several ladies made no ſcruple of telling him, "he might as well confine her for life in a Turkiſh Seraglio, as ſhe was never allowed to ſee any body but her brother;" but all theſe reproaches did not produce the deſired effect, he merely uſed to ſay, "he had his daughter's future welfare

at heart, and ſhe would one day find his words true; ſhe now enjoyed every thing but liberty, and that ſhe would prize the more, when ſhe married from her preſent confinement; at preſent ſhe is too young to judge for herſelf; if I was to allow her to ſee company, ſhe might diſpoſe of her heart in favour of ſome unworthy perſon, but I have taken pains to prevent that, and ſhe is under much leſs reſtraint than ſhe would be in a convent, where ſo many young ladies remain 'till they marry."

We may ſuppoſe he rather reproached himſelf for not having given way to his friends wiſhes, during Mademoiſelle de Ceare's illneſs, for as ſhe grew better, he often uſed to ſay, "her retired life was drawing to a concluſion, he was now looking out for a huſband worthy of her, and as ſoon as ſhe was married, ſhe would live in the world, and enjoy all thoſe pleaſures he had been obliged to refuſe her, but her preſent deprivation of them would only add to their novelty."

Mademoiſelle

Mademoiſelle de Ceare liſtened to all theſe great promiſes, without feeling herſelf much happier in the reflection, that her confinement would ſoon ceaſe. She had often heard the pleaſures of the great world extolled, but when ſhe reflected, that before ſhe enjoyed any of theſe boaſted diverſions, ſhe muſt diſpoſe of her liberty in favour of ſome gentleman of her father's chuſing, whoſe diſpoſition might perhaps be very incompatible with her own; ſhe rather wiſhed to prolong her preſent retirement

Now though Mr. de Ceare firmly believed, that whenever a young girl ſaw a handſome young man, ſhe might very poſſibly fall in love with him, and that this was the very thing, of all others, he wiſhed to prevent his daughter from doing, yet the preſence of Dubois, though poſſeſt of every requiſite to charm the moſt inſenſible female heart, did not give him any uneaſineſs; his profeſſion and rank were ſo much beneath his daughter, he foreſaw no more danger in permitting him

to remain tête à tête with her, than in allowing the ſame liberty to the Marquis D'Elcour; his ſuſpicions, in fact, were all confined to fops, and men of the world, or young men, whoſe rank might make them hope for his conſent to their union with his daughter, though their fortune might by no means entitle them to ſuch a match. But Dubois's profeſſion; the forced ſimplicity and gravity of his dreſs; the lowneſs of his origin, all combined to prevent his looking upon him as a dangerous companion for Mademoiſelle de Ceare; he merely looked upon him as he would have done upon her dancing, or muſick maſter, and never once preſumed to think he would dare to love a woman, ſo every way his ſuperior, and ſtill leſs, that ſhe would liſten to ſuch a man.

His affairs now often called him to Paris; he never made any ſcruple of leaving his daughter under the care of her governeſs, as uſual, and often deſired the young men to contribute to her amuſement, as much as they could,

could, during his abſence, not ſuppoſing they were often at home when he was away; in this conjecture, however, he was miſtaken, for they were all more at their eaſe, and much oftener together, when he was abſent.

Mr. de Ceare thought, by all the precautions he had taken, he had prevented every accident likely to derange his future plans; but juſt when he fancied himſelf moſt ſecure, and triumphed in his ſucceſs, all his precautions were rendered uſeleſs, for the difference dame fortune had been pleaſed to place between Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and the young Phyſician, did not prevent her feeling a very tender ſentiment in his favour; his amiable qualities, elegant figure, and graceful manners, ſoon made her forget his origin: in fact, ſhe loſt her heart, without being ſenſible of the theft the young man had committed, and looked upon the tender partiality ſhe felt in his favour, as the mere effect of gratitude.

"I owe him my life," ſhe would often repeat to herſelf, therefore far from endeavouring to check her friendſhip for him, ſhe would have deemed herſelf very ungrateful, had it been leſs fervent: but love, all powerful love, though it aſſumes a variety of diſguiſes, is uſually diſcovered at laſt, and Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſoon found her friendſhip deſerved a more tender appellation; this occurred to her upon reflecting, that when they returned to Paris, Dubois, whom ſhe now ſaw every day, with increaſing pleaſure, would certainly be included in her father's rigorous orders, which would exclude her from enjoying his company, even if he viſited her brother, which ſhe preſumed he always would.

Theſe ſorrowful ideas induced her to examine her heart, and ſhe was frightened to find how far gratitude had carried her. She flattered herſelf, notwithſtanding, ſhe ſhould ſoon conquer her paſſion for this amiable young man, by calling pride to her aſſiſtance, ſhe

ſhe therefore endeavoured to recollect the obſcurity of his birth, his father's profeſſion, &c. &c. and the conſequence of this retroſpection was, that a cool reſerve ſucceeded her uſual familiarity with Dubois. She, in ſome reſpects, diſguiſed her ſentiments under this maſk, but her heart, which ſhe merely deceived, ſuffered ſeverely by this conſtraint, which by no means anſwered the deſired effect; her love increaſed daily, as ſhe perceived freſh amiable qualities in the object of it; and the longer Dubois ſtaid, the more he repented not having left Mr. de Ceare's ſeat when he firſt intended it.

The reflections he made upon the ſtate of his heart, having awoke him one morning earlier than uſual, he got up and walked into the gardens; none of the family were ſtirring, ſo he had full time to ruminate upon this fatal paſſion, during his ſolitary walk, and a thouſand different ideas preſented themſelves to his mind.

" What

" What hopes can I entertain," ſaid he to himſelf; " how dare I even flatter myſelf, that any happy revolution can ever happen in my favour? was Mademoiſelle de Ceare poor, the large fortune I ſhall one day moſt likely poſſeſs, might tempt her father to overlook my origin? but now, what am I to expect? I muſt try to forget I was ever bleſt with the ſight of this charming creature, and that I was preſumptuous enough to adore her: I can no longer be of any ſervice here, I will ſet off immediately! but will my departure reſtore my peace of mind? ſhall I be leſs miſerable at Paris? certainly not; why then haſten misfortunes? abſence will be of no avail now, the fatal moment of our ſeparation will arrive but too ſoon; am I not ſufficiently punished, in not daring to form the leaſt hope fortune will ever prove favourable to me? why then deprive myſelf of the company of her I would give worlds to call mine for ever? her father, perhaps, at this very moment, is laying plans for her future happineſs;

happineſs; he is even now, perhaps, diſpoſing of her hand in favour of ſome great man, who will be incapable of feeling her merits, and who will marry her merely for the ſake of her fortune and family, and I ſhall not even have the conſolation of knowing ſhe is happy."

Thus he kept revolving to himſelf; the agitation of his mind was painted in his countenance, when the Marquis, who had come to look for him, perceived him at a diſtance.

D'Elcour ſtopt for a few minutes, to obſerve him. He had of late noticed his want of ſpirits, and he ſeemed juſt then a prey to the deepeſt dejection. He wondered what could have befallen him, and at laſt thought he had left ſome favourite lady at Paris, perhaps, or that he was tired of the country, where complaiſance alone had prolonged his ſtay.—Prepoſſeſt with this idea, he advanced towards him, told him his

thoughts, and what they had aroſe from; adding, "he was as tired of the country as he could be, and he would return to Paris with him whenever he choſe."

This propoſition, ſo contrary to Dubois's own wiſhes, really made him tremble. Heavens! thought he, he has ſurely gueſſed my ſecret; but upon the Marquis's beginning to laugh, upon ſome indifferent ſubjects, he recovered his uſual ſerenity.

"Faith," ſays D'Elcour, laughing, "this houſe is worſe than a monaſtry; my poor father-in-law muſt think a ſolitary life very agreeable to young people, or he would not confine Adelaide ſo ſtrictly: but when ſhall we ſet off? I will think of ſome excuſe for our departure."

At leaſt, ſays Dubois, let us wait Mr. de Ceare's return; it would be very impolite to leave his houſe in his abſence."

"Why,

"Why, to be ſure, Adelaide would not entertain the higheſt opinion of our gallantry," ſays the Marquis, "and poor thing, her amuſements are ſo circumſcribed, we ought to devote a little of our time to her. What ſhall we do to day? I am ſick of the very ſound of an inſtrument."

"I ſhould like to take a ſketch of that diſtant landſcape," ſays Dubois, "I have thought of it for ſome time, and I believe I ſhall attempt it to day."

"Oh, inſtead of drawing green trees and purling fountains," ſays the Marquis, "if my ſiſter has got any colours, and I know ſhe is a great paintreſs, we will each of us take a ſketch of her face, in miniature, by way of trying which of us excels in that art; it is ſome time ſince we amuſed ourſelves together that way; I am out of practice, but I don't mind, and Adelaide ſhall decide who deſerves the prize."

It will eaſily be ſuppoſed, with what rapture the propoſition was accepted by Dubois, "and what prize do you deſtine for the ſucceſsful candidate," ſays he, trying to conceal the joy the idea gave him, "if Mademoiſelle de Ceare's picture, I will do my endeavours to obtain it."

This was ſpoke ſo earneſtly, that the Marquis could not help noticing it, and ſaid, "he wiſhed the matter laid at his option; if it was in my power, my dear friend," he went on, "you ſhould not run any hazard about it, and it would be but a juſt tribute of the gratitude of the original, whom you have reſtored to health and happineſs; but Mr. de Ceare's thoughts would not coincide with mine; I am certain the good man would be frightened to death, at the bare idea of her picture being in the poſſeſſion of a young man: nay, I don't think he would favour me ſo far; and between you and I, I believe we muſt not mention the matter to him: in the firſt place, we muſt obtain the materials under

der ſome pretence, then we will finiſh our work during his abſence, if poſſible, for I dare ſay he would not approve of the amuſement; but the governeſs is a good natured ſoul, who will keep the ſecret for us, at my requeſt, I know, and ſtolen pleaſures are always allowed to be ſweeteſt."

"I muſt ſay," ſays Dubois, "I think Monſieur de Ceare carries his notions of propriety rather too far: I acknowledge that it would not be proper ſuch a treaſure ſhould be in the hands of a man, who had not the honour of being related to him, but ſurely he might gratify her brother ſo far, if he wiſhed it."

"Why if I would give him my word of honour, never to ſhew it to any body," ſays the Marquis, laughing, "he might, perhaps, indulge me ſo far: he ſees my ſiſter with a father's eyes, and fancies the whole world, the male part of it at leaſt, would fall in love with her image, where they to ſee it: and he has

has often ſaid, he would not with the world ſhould know how handſome his daughter is, 'till he has married her to ſome man after his own heart, and I think he will have ſome difficulty in finding ſuch a one; he will expect the poor ſoul to unite ſo many perfections."

"I really think marriages in France are not made in heaven," ſays Dubois, (in a half angry tone, trying to appear indifferent) but by the arbitrary will of parents, particularly among people of high rank, they always take the important choice of a huſband for their daughters, or a wife for their ſons, upon themſelves, and woe betide the children that don't comply with their deſires."

"Faith," ſays D'Elcour, "it ſaves one a world of trouble, and they commonly chuſe by the weight of their purſe, or their intereſt at court, great family, &c. ſo one has ſome conſolation, if one does not like the woman, and they don't inſiſt upon our

our loving theſe ladies they provide for us; they even overlook an engagement of the heart with another, if one does but comply with their kind wiſhes; and as for love, union of ſouls, &c. thoſe words are all left out of their vocabulary."

"I proteſt," ſays Dubois, "if love don't carry me to the altar, obedience never ſhall, much as I reſpect my father"

While they were debating this point, a ſervant came to let them know Mademoiſelle de Ceare waited breakfaſt.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

DURING the repaſt, the Marquis mentioned the colours, and his ſiſter promiſed to ſupply them with thoſe they wanted, aſking, with a ſmile, "what they were going to do," the Marquis told her their intentions, adding, "if ſhe had no objection."

"Far from it," ſhe ſaid, "ſhe ſhould like it of all things."

"I need

I need not ſay, which of the young men felt the moſt gratified by her condeſcenſion, and upon examining her drawing materials, they found every requiſite for their undertaking. As the Marquis had foreſeen, the governeſs looked upon this as a very innocent amuſement, particularly as ſhe was to be in the ſecret, ſo breakfaſt being over, the work was inſtantly begun. The Magiſtrate was abſent for three days, in which time both pictures were finiſhed. By agreement, they had not ſhewn each other their reſpective performances, nor did they tell Mademoiſelle de Ceare which was which, when they were put into her hands, to decide upon their merits; the old governeſs was preſent, and was exceſſively puzzled how to give her opinion, wiſhing to compliment the Marquis. The pictures were both very ſtrong likeneſſes, but Dubois had evidently ſucceeded much the beſt, and Mademoiſelle de Ceare, without any heſitation, ſpoke her ſentiments of them both, giving the preference to Dubois's,

bois's, the governeſs, of courſe, was of her opinion.

Thus the young Phyſician obtained the prize, and the Marquis rejoiced in his friends ſuperiority.

By way of paſſing the time, they now ſat about a few ſketches of the environs; Mr. de Ceare returned while they were thus employed, and was very happy to find they paſſed their time ſo agreeably, as his daughter had now joined the drawing party: he had a great deal of buſineſs upon his hands, therefore he very ſoon went back to Paris, and the Marquis, who had loſt all his ennui, propoſed to Dubois, to take a picture of each other, that they might each bear a reſemblance of their beſt friend about them, when they were aſunder. Dubois accepted this propoſition with the greateſt pleaſure; he was too attached to the Marquis, not to enjoy the thoughts of having his picture; beſides, he hoped, during this new occupation,

tion, to be able to take a ſecond of Mademoiſelle de Ceare, who generally ſat with them; they had given her the two they had finiſhed, each ſecretly hoping ſhe would have returned them for their trouble, but they happened to be equally diſappointed in their expectations, ſo they ſet to work upon each other's portraits, in which they both ſucceeded perfectly, and if Dubois longed for a picture of the beautiful Adelaide, ſhe did not leſs wiſh for the one her brother had of him, which ſhe determined to copy, if it ever fell in her way; ſtill the young Phyſician had not ſucceeded in his principal wiſh; but the governeſs, at laſt, without intending it, facilitated the matter, by aſking him very politely, to favour her with a portrait of her niece, Mademoiſelle de Ceare's companion, already mentioned; he inſtantly granted her requeſt; and as the young lady choſe to be drawn in the ſame attitude and dreſs he had taken Mademoiſelle de Ceare in, he obtained the picture he had taken of the latter, to copy the drapery, which he ſaid he would do in his

own room of an evening, that the picture might be finiſhed before the Magiſtrate's return; by this means he copied Mademoiſelle de Ceare's picture, and kept the one he had done firſt, he returned that he had juſt finiſhed, when he gave the governeſs the picture ſhe had requeſted.

As theſe amuſements uſually were carried on in Mademoiſelle de Ceare's preſence, Dubois and ſhe were uſually tête à tête, as the governeſs, who looked upon him merely as her Phyſician, often left the room, while the three young people were occupied with their pencils, and her niece uſually took the ſame opportunity. The Marquis's natural vivacity, ſeldom allowed him to ſet ſtill long, therefore he often uſed to leave them together, while he took a turn upon an adjoining terrace, for the benefit of the air, ſaying, "he thought ſo much ſtooping did not agree with his head."

Dubois

Dubois no ſooner found himſelf alone with Mademoiſelle de Ceare, but his pencil involuntarily eſcaped from his fingers, and his eyes, which were rivetted upon the amiable Adelaide, ſoon revealed to her the ſtate of his heart, though he never ventured to mention his love; ſtill ſhe was flattered by the ſilent homage he paid her, and ſometimes he flattered himſelf, he read in her charming countenance, a ſentiment of pity in his favour: but a gentle ſigh on his part, and a bluſh on her's, was all that paſſed between them.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare often reſolved to treat him with more indifference, but ſhe could only pity him, and did not wiſh to puniſh him for a crime, ſhe herſelf was equally guilty of, which was, ill-fated love.

The autumn was now drawing towards a concluſion, but the weather was ſtill very fine, and one day our lovers, and the Marquis D'Elcour, took a long walk in the neighbour-

ing woods. The governeſs had begged to be excuſed attending them, and her niece was confined to her room, by a ſevere cold. As they were returning home, they ſeated themſelves upon a bench, from whence they had a very fine view of the houſe, which they meant to take a ſketch of next, and were reaſoning about the different points of view it afforded, when the Marquis's ſervant came running towards them, with a letter in his hand, which he delivered to his maſter, informing him, at the ſame time, the meſſenger waited for an anſwer.

The Marquis coloured very much, and went home inſtantly, telling his ſiſter and Dubois, "he muſt anſwer his letter immediately, deſiring them to follow him at their leiſure, as he ſhould take the ſhorteſt cut to the houſe."

The epiſtle came from a lady at Paris, with whom he was a very great favourite, and who began to think his abſence rather too long;

long; ſhe had therefore wrote to hurry his return; and as the Marquis by no means wiſhed this little intrigue to reach Mr. de Ceare's ears, who was a rigid moraliſt, and had almoſt forgot he was ever young himſelf, he choſe to diſpatch his meſſenger before his arrival, as he was expected to dinner that very day.

Thus once more, and very unexpectedly, were our lovers left tête à tête. During a few minutes they remained quite ſilent; Mademoiſelle de Ceare felt herſelf ſtrangely embarraſſed, and Dubois, though he was very happy, ſtill was at a loſs for a ſubject; at laſt ſhe aroſe, and walked on towards a ſtile, that led into a plantation near the houſe; Dubois walked by her ſide in ſilence: when they arrived at the ſtile, he jumped over, and preſented her his hand: his emotions were now viſible; he reflected this was probably the laſt time he ſhould be thus indulged, and blamed himſelf ſeverely, for having expoſed himſelf to ſuch a tête à tête; their eyes

happened to meet as she reached the ground, and understanding too well the expression of Dubois's agitated looks, she could not refrain from bursting into a violent flood of tears, as she let go his hand: she attempted to hide them, but she had suppressed her feelings so long, she found it impossible; she hastily turned her back upon Dubois, who stood motionless, and could only softly say, is it possible, am I so blest? am I the occasion of those precious tears? gracious heaven! you feel for the misery you have unknowingly inflicted, most amiable of women, stepping before her while he spoke, and taking her trembling hand, she removed her handkerchief from before her lovely face.

Their eyes again met, and when she could recover her voice, she said, in a tremulous tone, "I perceive, sir, you guess my weakness, therefore I will candidly inform you of the real reason of these tears, I was unable to restrain.

Dubois's

Dubois's colour all forſook his cheeks, every joint of him trembled, and he could not have been more agitated, had ſhe been going to pronounce ſentence of death upon him. He preſſed the beautiful hand he ſtill held, hardly knowing what he did, while ſhe proceeded thus:

"I have long underſtood your eyes, ſir; I believe they are the faithful interpreters of your ſoul, though I know I ought not to acknowledge it; you are too well acquainted with my reaſon." Tears again ſtop'd her utterance.

Dubois's breath, which had almoſt forſook him, returned, and he ventured to preſs the hand he held, to his lips, and bathed it with his manly tears.

"Moſt amiable of women," reply'd he, "how can I expreſs my gratitude for your frankneſs towards a wretch, who is feelingly alive to his misfortunes; but miſerable as the

remnant of my life muſt prove, I can ſupport my exiſtence, ſince you deign to pity me. I can have no hope, but only ſay you forgive my preſumption, and ——"

Here Mademoiſelle de Ceare, who had very much recovered herſelf, ſtop'd him; "I am not accuſtomed to diſguiſe my feelings, ſir, but recollect, if my weakneſs has furniſhed you with this opportunity of declaring your ſentiments, it will be the laſt you will ever have, for remember, mutual love will not be our guide; I have already acknowledged too much;" ſhe ſighed, "we are not born for each other, believe me, though when I aſſure you, that your origin would not raiſe a ſcruple in my mind, I cannot diſpoſe of myſelf, or I would freely accept of your hand this very moment; but there is not the ſlighteſt ſhadow of hope, ſuch an event will ever take place, and I tremble, even at the bare idea, of my father's even ſuſpecting what has juſt paſſed between us! what would be my deſtiny if he ever ſhould,

ſhould, you are but too ſenſible: he has other views for me; therefore, let us jointly determine to ſtifle our unfortunate inclinations, which can only ſerve to make us both miſerable."

The young Phyſician liſtened very attentively, and now ſaid, "it is very eaſy to talk of impoſſibilities, madam; you have thoroughly explained yourſelf, and I ſeverely feel the ſtrength of your arguments; you wiſh to offer me ſome conſolation; you generouſly forbear to humble me more than I already am, by my own inſignificance; but mine is not an ordinary paſſion, it reſembles idolatry: you are ignorant of the ſufferings of a heart that adores, nay, idolizes, the moſt beauteous object in nature, without being even permitted to entertain the moſt diſtant hope of ever being bleſt in her poſſeſſion; for believe me, madam, I am too ſenſible of my own diſadvantages, to preſume to form any; but as for promiſing even to endeavour to forget you, (for to ſucceed in the attempt would be

impoſſible) I never ſhall; I glory in my paſſion, it is a part of my exiſtence; my prayers ſhall daily be addreſſed to heaven, for your future happineſs, and my miſery will only end with my life, but I can promiſe you this my ſecret ſhall be buried with me."

Poor Dubois was half wild, and would have gone on much further, if he had not been ſtopt by Mademoiſelle de Ceare, who entreated him to moderate his ſorrow, while ſhe gazed tenderly on him and preſſed his hand, ſaying,

"What can I promiſe you? if the moſt tender eſteem, and my ſincere friendſhip, can conſole you, you poſſeſs both, in the higheſt degree: gratitude demands ſuch a tribute, and my heart readily pays the debt; I ſpeak plain enough, my amiable friend, and I only need add, how much I regret you were not born in that rank of life, from whence my father will chuſe his ſon-in-law; therefore, let me

entreat you will ſtrive to convert your love into friendſhip."

"Impoſſible!" ſays Dubois, hardly letting her finiſh; "friendſhip! oh heavens! what a ſubſtitute for a paſſion like mine."

They were now near the houſe, and the Marquis having finiſhed his letter, and diſpatched his meſſenger, was returning to ſeek them; they therefore both haſtily endeavoured to compoſe their countenances, and aſſume an indifferent air, very foreign to their hearts, and as the Marquis's mind was pretty much occupied by his own reflections, he did not obſerve an alteration, either in their looks or behaviour, when he joined them.

They had not been at home many minutes, before Mr. de Ceare arrived, much ſooner than they expected him; the old governeſs lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, to return thanks they had reached home firſt, and they all ran into their own rooms, to

dreſs for dinner, a ceremony they would have diſpenſed themſelves with, if Mr. de Ceare had ſtaid at Paris. They very ſoon all joined him in the ſaloon, and welcomed him to St. * * *, from which he had been longer abſent than common; the day paſſed off as uſual, and Mr. de Ceare complaining of fatigue, retired early.

Dubois was very happy when he found himſelf alone; he ſeated himſelf near his bed, to revolve upon all that had paſſed between him and Mademoiſelle de Ceare; he was very happy he had diſcloſed his paſſion to her, as he no longer retained a doubt of being beloved; but theſe reflections afforded him but little ſatisfaction, when he reverted to the inſurmountable obſtables which ſtill prevented his giving way to hope. "Why was not I born a nobleman?" ſays he, "or why does a title confer ſuch merit upon a man, in the eyes of the world? to ſucceed in every proſpect we can form, we need only be great, they will excuſe our being good." All theſe wiſe notions

tions availed him nothing, he ſtill remained the ſon of Mr. Rhubarbin.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare's reflections, were not more conſolatory; ſhe loved Dubois as tenderly as he returned her paſſion, and was, in fact, more to be pitied than he was: ſhe felt ſhe had acted wrong, in allowing him to explain himſelf, though the occaſion aroſe very innocently, and what had paſſed could not be recalled ſhe knew; but to add to her other misfortunes, ſhe was convinced her father intended to look out for a huſband for her in the courſe of the enſuing winter, and the love ſhe felt for Dubois, made her even now deteſt the idea of marrying any other man; and the winter which advanced, with haſty ſtrides, warned her of this danger, and of her ſpeedy return to Paris, and once arrived there, ſhe never expected to ſee Dubois again.

The following days paſſed as the preceeding one's had, and the young Phyſician loſt no

no opportunity of conveying his ſentiments to Mademoiſelle de Ceare, by his looks. Her eyes frequently anſwered his, even without her knowing it; reflection ſometimes came to her aſſiſtance, and ſhe would pretend not to underſtand him: but theſe very efforts to conceal it, only convinced Dubois the more of her partiality towards him; at leaſt he was not the only one that perceived the favourable ſentiments ſhe entertained of him.

Mr. De Ceare began alſo to ſuſpect the real truth, and his amiable daughter ſoon gueſſed his ſuſpicions, by perceiving his penetrating eyes were always fixed either upon her, or Dubois. She was greatly alarmed, knowing the extreme violence of his temper, ſhe therefore determined, never to give Dubois an opportunity of again addreſſing her, particularly tête à tête; but upon reflection, ſhe reſolved to endeavour to ſee him once more, to put him upon his guard, if poſſible, by informing him of her own remarks, as ſhe

ſhe was convinced her father would ſoon make him feel the weight of his diſpleaſure, if he thought he had any foundation for preſuming he was a lover of his daughter; and the lowneſs of his birth expoſed him to all the effects of the Magiſtrate's anger, who could eaſily procure a letter de catchet, to confine him, perhaps, for life, if he thought he thwarted any of his deſigns: what a recompenſe, thought ſhe, for the man I owe my preſent exiſtence to? at all events, ſhe determined to ſee him once more, to acquaint him with all her fears, and to entreat him to leave Paris, if he poſſibly could, at leaſt for ſome time; his abſence might be of ſervice to them both, and ſhe was certain ſhe could be happier, knowing him in ſafety: beſides, ſhe thought it would convince her father, his ſuſpicions were ill founded; at preſent he could only have doubts, but thoſe once confirmed, there was every thing to dread. My brother will loſe his friend, and I ſhall pity, without being able to relieve him, for a perpetual cloiſter will be the leaſt puniſhment

I have

I have to expect, therefore, a ſpeedy ſeparation is the only method left, to prevent all theſe misfortunes. Her reſolution being now formed, ſhe waited impatiently for an opportunity to ſpeak to her lover in private; ſhe was fortunate enough to meet with one that very morning; ſhe inſtantly told him the remarks ſhe had made, and in the moſt earneſt manner, adviſed him to ſet out for Paris immediately.

He promiſed to be ſo ſtrictly upon his guard, he would diſſipate all Mr. de Ceare's ſuſpicions, only entreated her leave to remain at St. * * *, 'till they all ſet out for the metropolis; his ſudden departure alone, would certainly add to Mr. de Ceare's doubts. She agreed his arguments were juſt, and they both behaved with ſuch circumſpection all that day, and the following, that the Magiſtrate began to fancy he had been miſtaken in his conjectures, he therefore continued to treat Dubois with his accuſtomed politeneſs, convinced, almoſt, he had wronged his daughter

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and him; indeed he hardly ſuppoſed it poſſible, that Mr. Rhubarbin's ſon ſhould dare to look up to Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and ſtill leſs, that he could be beloved, notwithſtanding his elegant figure and extraordinary accompliſhments, which his want of birth prevented him from appretiating properly.

He therefore, in a few days, left St. * * *, as uſual, without mentioning his daughter's return to Paris for the winter. This was what neither of them had dared to hope for, and Dubois could not forbear, once more, mentioning his tender ſentiments to Mademoiſelle de Ceare; he felt a ſort of melancholy pleaſure in aſſuring her, though totally deprived of hope, he ſhould adore her for ever.

But Mademoiſelle de Ceare interrupted him, by ſaying,

"My amiable Phyſician, we have ſomething more eſſential to talk about, don't let us loſe the moment offered us; you have already told

told me you loved me, and I not only liſtened to you, but anſwered you with leſs prudence than complaiſance: in ſhort, though my reaſon now reproaches me, for the part I then acted, I cannot repent; gratitude deceived me, I muſt own, therefore I tell you once more, could I follow the dictates of my own heart, you would have no reaſon to complain, and I hope, ſince I have been ſo open with you, you will do ſomething to oblige me, that we may avoid, if poſſible, all the misfortunes that are likely to befall us, if we liſten to the voice of paſſion any longer."

Notwithſtanding theſe freſh aſſurances of Mademoiſelle de Ceare's affection, made Dubois very happy, ſtill he thought the concluſion of her ſpeech very cruel; he therefore remained for ſome time ſilent; he then ſaid,

"I have already told you, it was impoſſible for me to ceaſe to adore you, moſt lovely of women; in every other command I will obey you; exact any thing of me you think capable

capable of adding to your own tranquillity, I promiſe to ſubſcribe before hand."

Then promiſe me," ſays ſhe, " to leave Paris for a twelvemonth, as ſoon as we arrive there; I don't mean to pretend to fix the place of your reſidence, ſo it is, at leaſt, a hundred miles from the metropolis: you would not ſcruple to oblige me, I am ſure, if you could but feel what it coſts me, to exact this ſacrifice."

This was ſpoken in a voice hardly articulate, and the tears which accompanied her words, evinced their ſincerity.

Dubois was loſt in reflection and admiration; ſhe raiſed her eyes, and ſaid, " my happineſs depends upon it; I ſhall always look upon you as my beſt, nay, my deareſt friend; do you try to view me in the ſame light, but your abſence alone will efface my father's ſuſpicions; if you were to remain at Paris, I ſhould wiſh to ſee you, and you would do the ſame

ſame with regard to me, and I am very certain it would be a pleaſure we ſhould never enjoy, therefore, my dear Dubois," giving him her hand, which he preſſed to his lips, "let this be the laſt time we ever mention the word love; you will oblige me, I am certain, and may we meet again, as friends, when you return."

Dubois ſighed deeply, but penetrated with ſo much goodneſs, he bathed the hand he held, with his tears, ſaying,

"I will promiſe every thing you deſire, moſt lovely of your ſex, my abſence is neceſſary to your repoſe; I will return to Montpelier, as ſoon as we leave St. * * *, only allow me to enjoy your company 'till then, and I here ſolemnly promiſe, never more to mention the word love."

"Thank you, my beſt of friends," ſays the lovely Adelaide, "your wiſh to remain here 'till we leave the country, is too agreeable

ble to my own feelings, to permit me to refuſe you, but this muſt poſitively be the laſt tête à tête we ever enjoy; heaven proſper you in all your undertakings; you will often think of your patient, and I ſhall only forget the obligations I lay under to my Phyſician, when I reſign my laſt breath."

The two lovers now parted, and Dubois remained fixed to the ſpot, his eyes following all he held dear in the world.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

IT would be difficult to ſay, which felt the moſt, at the idea of the approaching ſeparation, which ſoon took place, ſooner, indeed, than they expected, for Mr. de Ceare was ſtill uneaſy, the remarks he had made at St. * * *, recurred with double force, while he was at Paris, he therefore determined to ſeparate the ſuſpected lovers, at all events, wiſhing ſtill to keep up his acquaintance with the young Phyſician, of whoſe ſkill he entertained

tained the higheſt opinion; the only way to part him and his daughter, was to bring her to Paris, where ſhe would return to her uſual ſolitude, and Dubois could not complain, ſince ſhe would be equally inviſible to all the Magiſtrate's own friends.

The moment he had formed this reſolution, he loſt no time in putting it into execution, but returned to St. * * * to ſupper that very evening, and during the repaſt, he ſaid he meant to take Mademoiſelle de Ceare to Paris the next day.

The Marquis, whom complaiſance alone retained in the country, was exceedingly happy, and not having perceived his friends, or his ſiſter's attachment, he did not doubt their being equally rejoiced, he therefore told his father-in-law, "he thought Paris was now much preferable to the leafleſs trees of St. * * *, and that he, for one, ſhould quit it without regret."

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The old governeſs, and her niece, expreſſed their joy alſo, upon the approaching departure; but how different were the lovers ſenſations: though they had long expected this ſeparation, and knew it to be inevitable, ſtill it came ſo ſuddenly upon them, they were exceſſively hurt. Mademoiſelle de Ceare tried to expreſs her ſatisfaction; Dubois caught the Magiſtrate's eyes upon him, which not a little added to the confuſion with which he ſaid, "he hoped the air of Paris would agree with his fair patient." They compoſed their countenances, however, as well as they were able, and tried to mix in the diſcourſe, but Mr. de Ceare, whoſe penetrating eyes were fixed upon them in turns, found all his latent ſuſpicions confirmed, he therefore determined to diſſimulate in his turn, as they were ſo ſoon to part, and the next day, after dinner, they all ſet out for Paris. Mr. de Ceare, his ſon and daughter, and Dubois, travelled in his coach; little paſſed during their ſhort jaunt, and the lovers very

very ſeldom dare venture to ſteal a look at each other.

As ſoon as they arrived at l'Hotel de Ceare, Mademoiſelle retired, under pretence of a little head ach, occaſioned by the movement of the carriage. Mr. de Ceare was no longer the dupe, though he dreaded a relapſe; he eaſily gueſt whence this illneſs aroſe; but angry as he was, he diſſimulated ſo well, that the lovers had not an idea he had gueſſed their ſecret; he renewed his thanks with the greateſt politeneſs to Dubois, who retired, as ſoon as he poſſibly could, wiſhing to ſee his father, from whom he had now been abſent near four months, therefore, after taking a polite leave of the Magiſtrate, and a cordial one of his dear friend, he ſet out for the Apothecary's, determined to ſhut himſelf up in his own room, after he had ſpent a little time with Mr. Rhubarbin, with whom he had hardly ſpent three hours altogether, ſince his return from Montpelier. His father would moſt likely be buſy, he thought, if not, he

determined to frame ſome excuſe, to retire as ſoon as poſſible. The moment he entered the houſe, he inquired for his father, and was informed he was in his ſtudy, he therefore inſtantly joined him.

Mr. Rhubarbin looked frightened when he ſaw him, and could hardly ſpeak for the firſt moment, but ſtood gazing at him in ſilence. Dubois attributed his father's ſurpriſe to his altered looks, and the air of melancholy his countenance ſtill retained, therefore, did all in his power to appear gay. The old gentleman, after a minute or ſo, recovered himſelf, and welcomed him with his accuſtomed tenderneſs.

Dubois inquired after his health, in the moſt affectionate manner; the Apothecary aſſured him he was never better, and without taking any notice of the alteration in his looks, that had ſeemed to ſtrike him ſo at firſt, ſaid, "he had expected his return very impatiently, as he wiſhed him very much to

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ſet out for Italy immediately, that he might ſpend the enſuing winter at Padua, where his profeſſion was arrived at a very great pitch; and as he wiſhed to be eminent in it, he ought not to neglect any means of inſtruction, therefore, he hoped he would prepare to ſet off as ſoon as poſſible."

This wiſh, of ſending him from home again, almoſt as ſoon as he arrived, ſurpriſed Dubois very much; and though his father's orders coincided with his own wiſhes, ſtill they puzzled him exceſſively, as the Apothecary appeared, if poſſible, fonder of him than ever, and yet certainly wiſhed to ſend him once more from home. However, without noticing the hurry his father ſeemed to be in to get rid of him, he ſaid he was ready to ſet off whenever he choſe, and only wanted ſufficient time to make preparations for ſo long a journey.

"Every thing is ready," ſays Mr. Rhubarbin, evidently very much pleaſed by his

ready acquieſcence with his deſire; "I meant to ſurpriſe you on your return from St. * * *, ſo I have had cloaths and linen all prepared for you; in ſhort, every thing I thought you might want; and I have even engaged a ſervant for you, who has been recommended to me by a very worthy friend of mine, and if I may perchance have forgot any thing you may wiſh to take with you," getting up and walking to his bureau, from whence he took a purſe of five hundred Louis d'Ors, which he put into Dubois's hand, ſaying, "that will ſupply my omiſſion, for now you will be ready to ſet of by break of day. I have bought you a travelling poſt chaiſe, and I will ſend and order poſt horſes immediately. You ſhall be provided with a very good letter of credit, and I won't even limit you to the amount of it; draw for whatever ſums you pleaſe, and depend upon my anſwering your drafts to any amount. I don't mean to fix your return; perhaps you may not like Padua, therefore I give you full liberty to chuſe any other town in Italy, where you may think

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you can proſecute your ſtudies with equal advantage; but I muſt entreat you would let me hear from you often, as your letters will be my greateſt conſolation during your abſence."

Dubois was almoſt petrified; his aſtoniſhment and wonder were ſo increaſed by his father's laſt ſpeech, it ſeemed ſo incompatible with the proofs of affection it contained, and the tears the old man could not help ſhedding, at the idea of parting with this ſon, he himſelf condemned to a ſort of baniſhment. His diſcretion prevailed, however, over his curioſity, which prevented him from endeavouring to penetrate into the reaſon of his father's ſtrange behaviour towards him, and he determined to obey his orders in every reſpect: indeed, they ſo perfectly agreed with his own ſentiments, that he thanked the Apothecary very tenderly for his generous care, begging him only to allow him to poſtpone his departure for twelve hours, that is, to permit him to ſet out at five o'clock the

next afternoon, inſtead of the ſame hour in the morning.

This Mr. Rhubarbin inſtantly agreed to, attributing his haſte to have him ſet out, to the ſeaſon's being ſo far advanced, and his great wiſh to have him continue his ſtudies among theſe eminent men.

Dubois gave him all the credit he deſerved, and very ſoon left him, to ruminate over his ſtrange behaviour towards him; his head and heart were, however, too full of his unfortunate paſſion, to allow him to think of any thing elſe ſcarcely; ſtrange as this ſudden departure had appeared to him. Mademoiſelle de Ceare's condeſcending goodneſs, only ſerved to increaſe his ſorrows; he was now upon the point of leaving her, moſt likely for ever; return whenever he would, ſhe would be married: he ſaw her in the arms of another; the very idea was madneſs; he never cloſed his eyes that night, and ſpent the next morning in his own room. His father thinking

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he was putting his things in order, previous to his departure, did not interrupt him, he therefore remained alone 'till dinner; but though he had revolved the matter ſeriouſly in his own mind, he could not form any ſatisfactory ſolution for his father's conduct, which appeared the more extraordinary to him, the more he reflected upon it.

The time for his departure now drew very near, and he once intended to have ſet off as ſoon as he roſe from table, but found it impoſſible to reſiſt giving way to the deſire he had formed, of once more taking leave of the object of his adoration. It was upon this account he had entreated his father to allow him to poſtpone his journey for twelve hours, therefore, he was determined, at leaſt to make the attempt; he therefore inſtantly ſet out for l'Hotel de Ceare; as he walked along, he reflected how wrong it would have been to have left Paris, without taking leave of the Marquis, who had hardly entered his head ſince he laſt parted with him, and this very

thought afforded him ſo excellent a pretence for his viſit, he ſuppoſed he ſhould not offend the object of his love; and if Mr. de Ceare was at home, when he heard of his intended departure, he could not avoid allowing him to take leave of his patient.

The Marquis was alone when he entered, and quite aſtoniſhed, when he learnt the reaſon of his viſit; Dubois not having given him a hint of this precipitate journey the day before, added to his wonder. He aſſured him he ſhould ſincerely regret the diſtance that would ſeparate them, though he was going to undertake a very pleaſant journey, adding, he did not think he ſhould remain long at Paris, after he had left it, as his leave of abſence from his regiment was almoſt expired; he had thought of getting it prolonged, but it was not worth his while now.

Dubois's mind was ſo pre-occupied, he hardly paid any attention to the Marquis's politeneſs,

politeneſs, but immediately aſked him "if he ſhould be permitted to ſee his ſiſter?"

D'Elcour, who did not even ſuſpect, that ſhe was the object of his friend's affections, ſaw no difficulty in what he ſeemed to wiſh, he therefore ſaid, "moſt certainly," inſtantly entreating he would follow him into Monſieur de Ceare's apartment, who, he was certain, would be as much amazed at his ſudden departure, as he was.

The Magiſtrate was not by any means flattered by this precipitate viſit, which Dubois eaſily perceived, as he received him very coolly, and ſaid, "he was exceſſively buſy."

Dubois found himſelf rather piqued, and gave Mr. De Ceare to underſtand, in a tone very much like his own, "this would be the laſt viſit he ſhould pay him for ſome time, mentioning his approaching departure, &c."

When the Magiſtrate heard this, he began to reflect how much he owed to the young Phyſician's ſkill, and how nobly he had behaved during his daughter's illneſs; he therefore totally altered his behaviour towards him, ſeemed ſurpriſed, but was, in fact, exceſſively rejoiced at this welcome, though unexpected intelligence: he now treated him with even more than ordinary politeneſs; wiſhed all young men would follow his example, who deſtined themſelves for any of the liberal profeſſions; it was the only road to fame; pregnoſticated his future greatneſs, and complimented him again, upon the proofs he had given him of his preſent ſkill; aſked him ſeveral queſtions about his journey; in ſhort, ſeemed the happieſt of men: all his preſſing buſineſs was poſtponed for the preſent: thanked Dubois very much for not leaving Paris without taking leave of them, only hoped neither he, nor any of his family, ſhould have occaſion for a Phyſician during his abſence: was ſure his daughter would be aſtoniſhed, when ſhe heard of his intended journey,

journey, aſked if he would not take leave of his parient, fixing his eyes upon him, while he uttered theſe laſt words.

Dubois was no longer the dupe of the Magiſtrate's pretended friendſhip, but his evident confuſion ſerved to augment the joy Mr. de Ceare felt at this ſpeedy departure. The young Phyſician merely ſaid, "he would avail himſelf of his kind offer," the Marquis was requeſted to ſhew his friend into his ſiſter's apartment, as Mr. de Ceare by no means wiſhed to be a witneſs of the ſcene, rather chuſing now to affect a total ignorance of their mutual ſentiments; and convinced this would be the laſt time they would ever meet.

The interview occaſioned the lovers a ſort of melancholy joy; the pleaſure they felt at being once more permitted to ſee each other, could not prevent them from reflecting upon the motives which had procured them that happineſs; though they had long foreſeen,

nay, planned this ſeparation themſelves, ſtill they felt all the horrors of it as it drew near; in ſhort, it almoſt amounted to an eternal adieu, for Dubois had every reaſon to ſuppoſe Mademoiſelle de Ceare would be married before his return.

While the Marquis left them for a few moments, to prepare to accompany his friend home, Dubois entreated, as the laſt favour, Mademoiſelle de Ceare would allow him to correſpond with her: the governeſs was preſent, but at ſome diſtance from them, and as one of her great complaints, though ſhe would never allow it, was being very deaf, they could ſay all they choſe, in great ſecurity.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare abſolutely refuſed to grant Dubois's requeſt, ſaying, "the only favour ſhe could allow him, was to mention her ſometimes in his letters to the Marquis, as ſhe was convinced her brother would always communicate any meſſage he might ſend to her, and promiſed to give him, through

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the ſame medium, conſtant marks of her remembrance."

Dubois thanked her very much for this condeſcenſion, though he was in deſpair when he reflected he was taking leave of her, perhaps for ever, and could not help expreſſing his apprehenſions, that when he returned, he ſhould find her married.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare could not bear the idea any more than he could; a few tears eaſed her heart, which was ready to break; ſhe then aſſured him, in a voice ſcarcely audible, "ſhe would raiſe every obſtacle in her power, to prevent his fears from being realized, though ſhe dare not flatter him ſhe ſhould be able to diſobey the commands of her father, and Dubois knew too well, what might be the conſequence of a refuſal on her part, for Mr. de Ceare could not bear to be contradicted, therefore a cloiſter for life would moſt likely be her fate, if ſhe even ventured to diſpute his will."

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Their melancholy reflections were interrupted by the return of the Marquis, and they both endeavoured to ſuppreſs their ſorrow, as the moment of ſeparation was arrived. Dubois took her lovely hand, and ventured to preſs it to his lips; ſhe preſt his hand in return, while ſhe looked another way to conceal her tears, and when ſhe had ſufficiently recovered her voice, ſhe bid him adieu, ſaying, "ſhe hoped to hear of his welfare through her brother."

The Marquis, who thought the requeſt very natural, inſtantly promiſed to ſhew her their mutual letters, but did not perceive the extent of their ſorrow at parting.

He accompanied Dubois home, and having ſeen him get into his carriage, returned to l'Hotel de Ceare, where he once more repeated the unfortunate Dubois's adieus to his ſiſter, as he had promiſed him, and Mademoiſelle de Ceare concealed her emotions

ſo well, that the Marquis had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of their mutual love.

Dubois ſoon wrote to the Marquis, and always mentioned his ſiſter in his letters who alſo, on her part, never failed to ſend a few words, by way of anſwer to his reſpectful inquiries, in thoſe her brother addreſſed to him, but they were ſoon deprived even of this conſolation.

The Maſter of Requeſts, all of a ſudden, took it into his head to ſend the Marquis the grand tour; he had now attained the proper age, and he foreſaw he would travel to ſome purpoſe, therefore, having obtained a ſufficient leave of abſence for the young man from the war office, he told him of his intentions, and deſired him to prepare to ſet of, adding, he wiſhed him firſt to croſs the Alps, then to viſit Germany and Holland, before he croſſed the Britiſh Channel.

D'Elcour

D'Elcour was very much ſurpriſed, but delighted at the idea; his lively imagination inſtantly foreſaw all the pleaſure he ſhould enjoy during this journey, little thinking how much his abſence would augment the ſorrows of his ſiſter, though his departure afforded her an opportunity of giving way to the heart-felt grief ſhe had hitherto been obliged to confine to her own boſom.

However, the joint abſence of her brother and lover, was ſoon not her only misfortune, for before the Marquis had been gone three months, her father preſented a gentleman to her, as a man he eſteemed, and wiſhed to addreſs her, and become his ſon in law.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare, dreading this ſevere parent's diſpleaſure, and unable to anſwer, burſt into a violent flood of tears. Her father, very much ſurpriſed, in a ſofter tone than uſual, deſired to know what occaſioned her emotion. Encouraged by his mildneſs, as ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe entreated him

not

not to oblige her to marry a man ſhe never could love.

As Mr. De Ceare knew this gentleman's character would not bear a very nice ſcrutiny, though he was a very proper match for his daughter, in point of birth and fortune, he did not ſo much wonder at her diſlike of him, and fearful he ſhould make her miſerable, was he to uſe his authority in this inſtance, he gave up to her this once, though he made a great merit of his condeſcenſion, and agreed to diſmiſs the gentleman; but he was hardly diſcarded, before ſeveral more preſented themſelves, and every day ſhe was perſecuted to marry, but ſhe always raiſed ſome objection, to avoid making a choice. She was perfectly acquainted with her father's temper, and acted accordingly; one was not of ſufficient rank to flatter her vanity, the other was not rich enough; ſuch a one was reported to have ſpent his fortune, and another was addicted to gaming, and would loſe his.

Theſe

Theſe reaſons had their weight with her father, but he could hardly keep his temper with her, when ſhe objected to their morals, youth, perſons, &c. but in ſhort, ſhe found ſuch excellent excuſes, that near a year and a half paſſed over, without her being obliged to decide in favour of any one; but all her ſcruples and pretexts were rendered uſeleſs at laſt, by a very elegant man, who put himſelf upon the liſt of her admirers.

He was juſt turned of ſix and twenty, of very high rank, and immenſely rich withal, very accompliſhed, and bore a moſt excellent character. He had already been married, and had proved himſelf a moſt excellent huſband, at an age when young men of quality ſeldom treat their wives with much reſpect.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare felt all this gentleman's merit, though ſhe could not love him; but what perplexed her moſt, was, the impoſſibility of ſtarting any objection againſt ſuch

ſuch a man, without unavoidably incurring her father's anger. However, after having weighed the matter in her own mind, ſhe determined not to have him, if ſhe could poſſibly avoid it; for though ſhe never entertained the ſlighteſt hope of being united to Dubois, ſtill ſhe could not bear the thought of becoming the wife of any other man; ſhe therefore treated this gentleman with great indifference, though ſhe could not find any fault with him, in hopes he would abandon his purſuit. He had viſited for ſome time, to very little purpoſe, which Mr. de Ceare perceived, and being tired with her perpetual refuſals, he did not chuſe to give into this with the ſame facility; he by no means liked the thoughts of her miſſing ſo advantageous a match; ſhe might never meet with ſuch another offer, he therefore determined this time to exert his authority, without paying any attention to her prayers or tears; he therefore mentioned the matter to his daughter, as an affair abſolutely concluded upon between him and the Marquis of ——, deſiring

ſiring her not to ſtart any objections, as he would be obeyed, and ſhe might fix the day for their nuptials, as ſoon as ſhe choſe: in ſhort, the only indulgence ſhe could obtain, was, to put the wedding off for a fortnight, from that very day; and this interval, Mr. de Ceare ſaid, ſhe might ſpend in preparations, as he ſhould take his future ſon-in-law with him into Burgundy, to ſhew him the ſeat he ſhould beſtow upon her, in part of her fortune, and meant to return to Paris two days previous to the one he had fixed upon for the celebration of their nuptials.

This arrangement was made in ſo abſolute a manner, that his daughter dare not even venture to hazard an objection, and really was in hopes, while her father was preſent, ſhe ſhould be able to obey him when the time came; but ſhe was no ſooner alone, than ſhe began to reflect upon the horror of beſtowing her hand without her heart, to a man with whom ſhe muſt paſs the remainder of

her

her life, and towards whom ſhe muſt behave, at leaſt with civility.

Theſe ideas ſtung her into a ſtate of deſpair, ſhe therefore determined to avoid this inevitable ſtate of miſery, if poſſible, and in the firſt hurry of her mind, ſhe formed a deſign of ſeeking refuge in an Abbey, about twenty leagues from Paris, of which a ſiſter of her mother's was now Abbeſs; ſhe propoſed ſtaying in this convent till her father's anger was appeaſed, and 'till ſhe could bring him to promiſe, never to marry her againſt her will. She had no ſooner formed this project, than ſhe thought of putting it into execution. She then reflected, that ſhe ſhould not be able to accompliſh her deſign, without the aſſiſtance of ſome perſon, and ſhe was fearful to put her confidence in any of the women about her; indeed the greateſt difficulty conſiſted in fixing upon a proper perſon, one that would not betray her.

At laſt ſhe pitched upon one of her father's footmen, who was about three and twenty, and known

known to be a very witty clever fellow; but his chief recommendation in her eyes was, his being her foſter brother, his mother having been her wet nurſe, and he had lived with her father from a child. She had often taken notice of him, and he had always appeared very much attached to her; ſhe therefore determined to truſt him with her ſecret, in preference to every body elſe around her, certain, as ſhe thought, of his fidelity and diſcretion; ſhe therefore took the firſt opportunity, after her father's departure, to inform this man of her repugnance for the lover he had choſen for her, adding, "ſhe was determined never to marry."

Champagne entered into all her ſorrows, and deplored her misfortunes very ſincerely, ſhe therefore thought ſhe ran no riſk in intruſting him with her deſign, ſo ſhe aſked him "if he wiſhed to ſerve her, and if ſhe might, with ſafety, entruſt him with a ſecret?"

He

He immediately ſwore, "he would lay down his life for her, with pleaſure." She then told him how happy ſhe ſhould be, if ſhe could but avoid her father's tyranny, as ſhe termed it, by ſeeking a temporary aſylum with her Aunt, at the Abbey of * * *, where he had often been, and if he wiſhed to be of ſervice to her, he would procure a carriage for her journey, and attend her thither.

The ſervant, who was in ſuch a hurry to ſhew his zeal to ſerve her, but a few minutes before, now ſeemed alarmed at the bare idea of ſuch an enterpriſe, and repreſented to her the ſtrictneſs of the French laws againſt a man, convicted of having run away with a minor, hoping ſhe would excuſe the liberty he took, but ſhe muſt know, it would be death to him, was he found out; and ſuppoſe ſhe did arrive at the Convent in ſafety, and that her father could not get her out of it by fair means, the nuns themſelves would moſt likely give her up, when they found ſhe could not pay for her board, which Mr. de

Cour

Ceare certainly would not, and ſhe could not oblige him to it.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare had not made all theſe reflections, but going to a drawer, ſhe ſoon raiſed this difficulty, by ſhewing him two hundred pounds, that her paternal grandmother had given her a few days before ſhe died, which her father did not even know of, the old lady having given it her in private, for her own pocket money, and ſhe had not had occaſion to ſpend any part of it; beſides this, ſhe ſhewed him all her mother's jewels, which were in her poſſeſſion, and of immenſe value, adding, ſhe had no doubt but her father would be reconciled to her, before all that was ſpent. At all events, her Aunt would protect her, and ſhe would rather turn Nun, than marry a man ſhe diſliked; concluding, by promiſing him a handſome reward if he would be ſecret, and giving him her word of honour, no one ſhould ever know he had any hand in the buſineſs.

The

The hopes of gain had much more weight with this fellow, than the future welfare of his miſtreſs; he no longer objected to her plan; he foreſaw all would turn out for the beſt, and he would obey her orders very punctually, making a thouſand vows of fidelity, &c.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare was exceſſively happy to think ſhe had ſucceeded ſo well; they now agreed, that the morning after the enſuing one, he ſhould bring a poſt-chaiſe to the garden gate, which he was to take care ſhould be left open, and ſhe would meet him there. He now only begged ſhe would leave every thing to him, and for his own ſake, ſhe muſt ſuppoſe, he would take care to prevent any ſuſpicions. In the firſt place, he would go and aſk the ſteward leave to go and ſee his mother, for a few days, as Monſieur was abſent, by which means he could leave the Hotel that very evening, and be ready to attend her at the appointed time, without being ſuſpected to have any part in her elopement, when it was diſcovered.

"This was a very lucky thought," Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſaid, deſiring him to put it into immediate execution, which he did, and had no difficulty in gaining the deſired permiſſion.

Every thing favoured Mademoiſelle de Ceare; her governeſs was ill, and had for ſome time ſlept in a ſeparate apartment, therefore, at the time appointed, having put her money in her pocket, and taken the box that contained the jewels, under her arm, ſhe walked ſoftly down ſtairs, got out unperceived, and found Champagne waiting at the garden gate, which he had unlocked on the outſide, having taken one of the keys away with him for that purpoſe.

I cannot pretend to ſay which was the moſt pleaſed, actuated as they were by different motives, to find they had ſucceeded thus far. He inſtantly took the box from her, and aſked her "if ſhe had not forgot any thing," looking

looking ſurpriſed to ſee ſo ſmall a ſtock of baggage.

"Nothing," ſhe ſaid.

"Why, did not ſhe take any clothes?"

"She had got a change of linen in her pocket," ſhe ſaid, "and that was all ſhe wanted."

They had not much time to debate this point, ſo they walked to a little diſtance, where the chaiſe was waiting; Mademoiſelle de Ceare flung herſelf in, Champagne put the box at her feet, mounted behind himſelf, and off they drove; and though ſhe was ſhocked at the ſtep ſhe had taken, ſtill ſhe was very happy; ſhe had avoided the terrible engagement ſhe ſo much dreaded.

The Monaſtery where ſhe was going, might be about forty miles from Paris, and as ſhe did not mean to change horſes, her confidant

told her they ſhould reach it about four o'clock that afternoon. She only begged they would ſtop as little on the road as poſſible, which he readily promiſed, telling her, "they would not go the direct road, for fear of being purſued, as he knew a more private way, through the Foreſt of Fontainebleau; this ſhe conſented to very willingly, not wiſhing to be ſeen.

The poſtillion affected to make all the ſpeed he could, but much about the time ſhe expected to have been at her journey's end, in the very thickeſt part of the foreſt, the chaiſe ſtopped ſuddenly.

She was rather alarmed, knowing there had been often robberies, and ſometimes murder, committed in theſe woods; but ſeeing no one approach the carriage, her ſpirits began to revive, and ſhe concluded ſomething was the matter with either the horſes or the harneſs; but her ſurpriſe more than equalled her firſt fright, when ſhe ſaw

Champagne

Champagne and the poſtillion approach the chaiſe door, each armed with a piſtol, and with the moſt menacing looks, they ordered her to get out, threatening her with inſtant death, if ſhe made any noiſe, or the leaſt reſiſtance.

"Oh heaven!" ſays ſhe, and would have implored their pity, but each arm was raiſed, and ſhe was commanded to be ſilent; ſhe accordingly obeyed, and they began to rifle her pockets, from whence they took her money, &c. they then tied her to a tree, at ſome diſtance from the road ſide and the chaiſe, ſtill threatening her with inſtant death if ſhe ſcreamed, or made the leaſt noiſe; they then returned to take the box which contained her jewels, having looked round them and ſeen all was ſafe.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare began now to feel the exceſs of her imprudence, in truſting either herſelf, or her ſecret, with ſuch low mercenary wretches. She expected every

moment they would put their menaces of murder into execution; death, indeed, was preferable to being abandoned, and in ſuch a horrid ſituation; in a place where hardly any body ever paſt; for ſhe could not diſcern the track of any carriages, and was convinced ſhe had been purpoſely decoyed into this lonely ſpot.

While ſhe was making theſe bitter reflections, ſhe perceived, at ſome diſtance, two horſemen deſcending a hill, and advancing towards her. The villains, in their hurry, had not taken her ſo far into the wood, as to prevent her ſeeing any travellers who might chance to be upon the road they had come, and a little turning in the road, gave her from her poſition, the advantage of her perſecutors in this reſpect. She dared not ſpeak, or make any kind of noiſe at firſt, though ſhe determined to run all hazards, in caſe they came within hearing.

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We leave the reader to gueſs the agitation ſhe was in during five minutes or more, while the horſemen, whom ſhe ſometimes loſt ſight of, from the intervening bows and turnings, were again in view, and evidently much nearer, aſcending the hill upon which ſhe ſtood. She alſo kept a ſtrict eye upon the two villains, who were buſily employed in breaking open the little box, as ſhe had either loſt, or forgot the key, in her hurry; and the lock being a very good one, they found ſome difficulty in accompliſhing their ends; it might have been ſuppoſed they would have taken another opportunity for performing this job, but the horſes were fatigued, and grazing, and their anxiety got the better of their prudence; they were hammering at it with a large ſtone, having nothing fit for the purpoſe, which noiſe, joined to the anxiety they were both in, prevented them from hearing the horſemen advance; though riding upon the turf, they made very little noiſe, and were not talking.

The vile wretches had juſt ſucceeded, and were preparing to ſhare the ſpoils, when ſhe ſaw the gentlemen cloſe to them, and perceived the villains ſtart, and look behind them. The horſemen were now ſo near, ſhe ventured to ſcream out help! murder! as loud as ever ſhe could, ſeveral times. The robbers hearing her ſcreams, jumped up, and put themſelves in a poſture of defence, (for the two new comers had checked their horſes, upon hearing Mademoiſelle de Ceare's voice) and inſtantly fired their piſtols at theſe two unwelcome intruders.

As it is a cuſtom very prevalent in France, for gentlemen and their ſervants to ride armed, the new comers inſtantly returned the ſalute, and each piſtol did execution; the poſtillion wounded the gentleman's ſervant mortally, and he expired, after having revenged his death, as the poſtillion fell almoſt at the ſame moment, at his horſe's feet. The miſerable Champagne was wounded by the gentleman, in the ſhoulder, and he killed the gentleman's

gentleman's horſe, which fell upon his rider. This accident afforded the villain time to mount the one the ſervant had fallen from, and to ride off, for his wound was not of conſequence enough to prevent him, he therefore ſet off, towards Paris, as hard as ever he could.

The gentleman had not received any hurt, and very ſoon diſengaged himſelf from under his horſe, and inſtantly ran towards the place from whence the ſcream had proceeded; called out, but no one anſwered, for Mademoiſelle de Ceare had fainted during the engagement, if the late fracas may be termed ſo; however, he continued his ſearches, not thinking of purſuing the wretched ſervant who had eſcaped; in fact, it would have been a folly to have attempted it, as there were no horſes, but thoſe which belonged to the chaiſe, which, half knocked up, were grazing as they ſtood: beſides, he thought it would be very inhuman to leave the ſpot, without diſcovering, if poſſible, from whom

the ſcreams proceeded; he therefore penetrated among the trees, and very ſoon perceived the lady, to all appearance dead. He inſtantly flew forwards, and unbound her from the tree, and had the happineſs to find ſhe ſtill breathed. In his fright, he hardly knew what he did, however, when he had diſengaged her from the cords, he ſeated himſelf under the tree, and endeavoured to recover her, which no man knew better how to do; but what was their mutual ſurpriſe, when the colour returned into her cheeks, and ſhe opened her eyes, to find herſelf in the arms of Dubois?

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

THEY gazed upon each other for ſome time, without being able to ſpeak, at laſt Mademoiſelle de Ceare's tears relieved her, and ſhe exclaimed,

"Is it poſſible! you were deſtined then by heaven to ſave my life.."

Dubois anſwered her with all the agitation of a fond lover, ſaying,

"He hardly knew how to expreſs the exquiſite happineſs he felt, at having arrived at ſo critical a moment; but this part of the foreſt," he ſaid, "is not the ſafeſt place in the world to converſe in juſt now."

Mademoiſelle de Ceare begged to know if he had received any hurt; he aſſured her he had not, but wiſhed to be going, as the villains might have ſome accomplices, which the wounded man would very poſſibly ſend in ſearch of them. She inſtantly agreed to his propoſal, and they walked into the road, at ſome little diſtance from where the carriage ſtood, but her legs trembled ſo, ſhe was not able to ſtand, ſo ſeated herſelf upon the ground, while Dubois examined his faithful ſervant, and convinced himſelf he was quite dead, as well as the other villain, near whom ſtood the box, which had occaſioned this horrid cataſtrophe; ſome of its contents were laying upon the graſs by it. Dubois replaced them, and carried it to the chaiſe, put it in, and then led the horſes to where

where Mademoiſelle de Ceare was ſitting, and begged her to get into the carriage immediately, which ſhe did, by his aſſiſtance. He now mounted the poſtillion's horſe, and made the beſt of his way towards a little village, where he had ſlept the night before; he had left the high road on account of the heat of the weather, and had taken the ſhady path, where he had met Mademoiſelle de Ceare, as the neareſt way to get into the Paris road again.

They ſoon arrived at the cabin, where he had ſlept the preceding night, and had ſpent greateſt part of the day, on account of the intenſe heat, meaning to purſue his journey in the cool of the evening; they found plenty of proviſions for the horſes, but they were obliged to content themſelves with a very frugal ſupper; and this was not the only inconvenience they experienced. Dubois had paſt the preceding night upon ſome ſtraw, laid upon the floor, the beds being worſe than their entertainment; this occurred to him now, though

though he had barely felt the inconvenience of it himself, but he knew of no better place they would be able to reach with their horſes, who were already tired, and there was not any chance of getting freſh ones, he was informed, ſo far out of the great poſt road; but our lovers had too much to ſay to each other, to think of ſleeping. At firſt they agreed to ſet out at break of day, to make their complaint to the Lord of the Manor, that he might purſue proper means to bring the vile Champagne to juſtice, but upon inquiring whoſe manor they were upon, they found it belonged to the Abbey they were going to, ſo they thought they need not ſet out ſo early as they at firſt intended.

The night was paſt in recapitulating all that had happened to either of them during their ſeparation; the day ſurpriſed them in this occupation, ſo Dubois, after giving every neceſſary order about his ſervant, that his body might at leaſt be buried properly, and

leaving plenty of money for that purpoſe, they ſet of.

Mademoiſelle De Ceare had told Dubois her reaſons for leaving her father's houſe, and did not endeavour to conceal her diſguſt for the gentleman he wiſhed her to marry. Dubois thanked her in the tendereſt manner, and informed her, in his turn, he had ſpent too tedious long years at Padua, and had been requeſted to prolong his ſtay, but had found it impoſſible to remain any longer at ſuch a diſtance from all he held dear in the world, and he was now returned more in love than when he ſat out, though he did not entertain the ſlighteſt hopes of ever agai. ſeeing or ſpeaking to her, and had determined never to make the attempt, for fear of diſpleaſing, or expoſing her to her father's anger; he alſo ſaid, he had left the Marquis D'Elcour, in perfect health, at Venice, from whence, he underſtood, he was going into Germany.

Dubois

Dubois having become Mademoiſelle de Ceare's poſtillion over night, was obliged to reſume his poſt in the morning, as there was not any body in the houſe, capable of undertaking the office, which by no means diſpleaſed him, as Mademoiſelle de Ceare had exacted a promiſe of him, to quit her as ſoon as he found any body capable of driving her. She was however forced to allow him to officiate, when they ſet out for the Abbey, where ſhe hoped to have arrived the day before, which ſhe certainly would have done very eaſily, had it ſo pleaſed her raſcally conductors, and Dubois; and ſhe had made it ſo late before they ſat of, contrary to their firſt intentions; it was almoſt dark before they were any nearer to the Convent, than they were when they ſet out in the morning, though they had travelled a great many miles; but Dubois did not know the road, and he had received ſuch a blundering direction from the people of the hut where they ſlept, that he totally loſt himſelf, and found at laſt, to his great ſurpriſe, they were in the very part of the

foreſt

foreſt where he had met Mademoiſelle de Ceare the evening before; he therefore ſtopt, and conſulted with her what was to be done, at laſt they agreed to return from whence they came, if they met with no one to direct them, as the horſes were almoſt knocked up.

They had hardly ſet of again, 'ere they met a peaſant, of whom they inquired the road to the Abbey; he told them they were about three leagues from it, and offered to conduct them into the high road which led to it; this they readily accepted, and ſoon reached the great road, where the peaſant left them, telling them they could not miſs their way now, as it was quite ſtrait, but they had not proceeded a mile, before they were ſurrounded by the Maréchauſſée, or Police guards, who inſtantly ſtopt them.

It would have been impoſſible for Dubois to have defended himſelf againſt fifteen men, well mounted and armed; but knowing himſelf

ſelf perfectly innocent, he ſurrendered without the leaſt reſiſtance, eaſily preſuming theſe men were come in purſuit of Mademoiſelle de Ce. re, whoſe father had certainly diſcovered her flight; he therefore looked upon the event as a matter of indifference to himſelf, but was very anxious for his fair companion, not doubting but her elopement would ſubject her to the ſevereſt reproaches from her father, if he did not force her into a Cloiſter. However, as he could not prevent what he had hardly foreſeen, he made no remonſtrances.

He was ordered to diſmount inſtantly, and to get upon another horſe, from which one of the archers alighted. He did as they deſired, after they had taken his piſtols, which he ſtill had about him; they then tied his legs under the horſe's belly. He was not in the leaſt concerned at this rigorous treatment, which he looked upon as the mere conſequence of his having been found with the fair fugitive, and evidently being acceſſary, at leaſt apparently,

parently, in her elopement. He was not known to any of the party who ſtopt them, therefore he was not at all offended with them, convinced, in his own mind, his captivity would ceaſe, the moment he ſaw Mr. de Ceare, who would certainly be very much obliged to him for the ſalutary protection he had afforded his daughter.

While he was conſoling himſelf with theſe reflections, Mademoiſelle de Ceare was lamenting the overturn of her project; though ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf her evaſion would break off her intended marriage; ſhe could not ſuppoſe the Marquis of * * * would accept her hand, after ſhe had given ſuch ſtrong proofs of the repugnance ſhe entertained for him; but the rigour ſhe ſaw Dubois treated with, hurt her exceſſively, though like him, ſhe ſuppoſed, it only aroſe from an error, and would ſoon be diſſipated; but to ſee the man of all others, whom ſhe preferred, and who had ſo recently, for the ſecond time, ſaved her life, tied like a criminal, was more than ſhe

ſhe could bare with patience; ſhe entreated the archers would ſet him at liberty, ſhe would be anſwerable he would not attempt to make his eſcape, adding, ſhe owed him her life, and ſhe would reward them all very handſomely, if they would oblige her.

They paid very little attention to what ſhe ſaid; the commander of the little troop only ſaid, "they muſt do their duty; if the gentleman was innocent, he might clear himſelf before his Judges, who certainly would not treat him unjuſtly."

This ſpeech drew a torrent of tears from Modemoiſelle de Ceare, who made uſe of every argument ſhe thought would ſoften them in favour of her lover, but the commander told her, "he muſt obey the orders he had received, which were, to ſecure the gentleman he would find with her, as he had done; ſhe beſt knew why they were given, he could only put them into execution."

The

The archer who had diſmounted, took upon himſelf to drive poſtillion, and they ſet off full ſpeed; changed horſes at the firſt poſt houſe, and never ſtopt but to do the ſame, 'till they reached Paris, which Mademoiſelle de Ceare had the mortification to ſee Dubois enter, tied like a criminal, and to learn that he was going to the Conciergerie, one of the principal priſons, where the archers left him, after having ſearched him, and taken from him every thing of value he had about him. This gave him little concern, all he regretted was, Mademoiſelle de Ceare's picture, which he had always carried about him, from the firſt moment he obtained it.

He had no ſooner undergone this ſevere treatment, but he was put in irons, and conducted into one of the moſt diſmal dungeons imagination can form an idea of. More and more ſurpriſed at the rigour he met with, he begged the jailer to allow him to write a few lines to his father, but received a flat denial to his requeſt; he then entreated, as a particular

ticular favour, they would at leaſt let Mr. Rhubarbin know of his ſituation; this they promiſed to do, without ever keeping their words. Such inhuman treatment excited his wonder, as he could not conceive what it all meant; and as no one came near him, he could not learn what was going forward againſt him; his only conſolation was, that he muſt be acquitted, as ſoon as he came to be examined before his Judges, and his innocence, and innate fortitude, induced him to wait for an explanation, with more patience than moſt people would have done in a ſimilar ſituation; his greateſt uneaſineſs aroſe from his apprehenſions of the reception Mademoiſelle de Ceare would meet with from her naturally ſevere, and now he was convinced, by his own treatment, enraged father.

But if he was uneaſy upon her account, how much more ſo was ſhe upon his, after ſhe had loſt ſight of him, upon their arrival at Paris.

She

She was conducted to a Convent in the Rue St. Antoine, where her father was waiting her arrival, one of the archers having gone forward, to inform him they had ſecured her and Dubois, and that they were bringing them to Paris, as he had ordered.

Mr. De Ceare was in one of the outer apartments, and his daughter flung herſelf at his feet the moment ſhe was ſhewn in to him, wiſhing to excuſe her flight, if poſſible; but he was in ſuch a fury, that if he had not been prevented by the officer who accompanied her in, ſhe would have had reaſon to dread feeling the weight of his arm, as well as his anger; and what aſtoniſhed her moſt, in this terrible reception, was, that inſtead of reproaching her for having left his houſe in the manner ſhe had done, to avoid the match he had arranged for her, he accuſed her of having eloped with Dubois.

This ſhe in vain endeavoured to refute, by telling him the real fact, taking up her ſtory from

from her firſt intention of quitting his houſe, and calling her Maker to witneſs the truth of her aſſertions; but he would not even liſten to her vehement aſſeverations of Dubois's innocence, but cut her ſhort, ſaying,

"Go, infamous wretch, unworthy even of the name of daughter; go, hide thy ſhame in the moſt obſcure retreat, where you ſhall finiſh your days, you may depend upon it, and thank heaven, and my clemency, a Letter de Cachet don't ſhut you up in a convent of penitents for ever, without making my ſhame public; but if my weakneſs has prevented me from treating you as you deſerve, I promiſe you your vile accomplice ſhan't eſcape my juſt vengeance; a ſcaffold will avenge me, and deliver the world of ſuch a ſeducer, robber, and aſſaſſin."

Mademoiſelle de Ceare trembled more than ever, and already ſaw Dubois, in imagination, under the hands of the executioner, but it was in vain ſhe again, on her knees, implored

implored her father's forgiveneſs, and aſſured him, "that however appearances might condemn Dubois, he was perfectly innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, and notwithſtanding whatever he might have heard againſt him, ſhe owed her life to him; that accident alone had occaſioned their meeting: her own puniſhment, ſhe aſſured him, ſhe would ſupport with fortitude, as ſhe was conſcious, ſhe in a great meaſure deſerved his anger, but entreated the innocent Dubois might not ſuffer for her crimes.

The Magiſtrate let her remain in her humble poſture, without taking any notice of her: it is impoſſible to ſay how far her tears and ſupplications might have ſoftened him, if, in the interim, as if all nature had combined to render Dubois guilty in his eyes, the guards who had conducted that unfortunate young man to priſon, had not arrived at the convent, and delivered to Mr. de Ceare, among other things, his daughter's picture, which had been found about the priſoner.

This freſh diſcovery increaſed the Magiſtrate's paſſion to a moſt violent degree, he raved and ſtamped about like a madman; he did not want any further proof, this picture was a convincing one, he could not be miſtaken, the likeneſs was ſo ſtrong. Thus he ran on, without liſtening to any body; ſtopped ſhort at times, and looked at his daughter, whoſe ſurpriſe was inconceivable at this freſh accuſation, for he proteſted ſhe alone had given it to the Phyſician, and her evident ſurpriſe merely appeared the effect of conſcious guilt in his eyes.

She in vain aſſured him ſhe had not the ſlighteſt conception how her picture came to be in the poſſeſſion of Dubois, vowing ſhe had not beſtowed it upon him. But her enraged father paid not the leaſt attention to her proteſtations.

"Heaven grant me patience," ſays he, "ceaſe to aggravate your crimes, the proofs of

of this abominable intrigue are too ſtrong to be refuted by any thing you can ſay."

He therefore ſent for the Rourieſe, or Portreſs of the Monaſtery, and deſired ſhe might be inſtantly taken into the Convent; he had already given his orders concerning her to the Prioreſs, (for this was not an Abbey) that ſhe might be ſhut up in her own room, and not allowed the ſlighteſt communication with any body.

His orders were executed with the utmoſt rigour; indeed he could not have found a more likely place to have them ſtrictly conformed to, than this convent, the Prioreſs of which had been formerly violently in love with Mr. de Ceare, and had entertained great hopes of being united to him, when he fell in love with the beautiful Marchioneſs D'Elcour, which of courſe overturned all her ſanguine expectations, and the good lady being rather advanced in years, ſhe turned Nun, in a fit of deſpair; and as her renunciation

of the world had not been occaſioned by her great devotion, ſhe ſtill retained a violent averſion for the innocent cauſe of her forced vocation, and felt herſelf extremely happy in the preſent inſtance, in having it in her power to revenge her horrid wrongs upon the Marchioneſs's fair daughter; therefore, under the pretence of that auſtere virtue, rarely the inhabitant of cloiſters, ſhe ſcrupulouſly adhered to the promiſes ſhe had made Mr. de Ceare, convinced his anger was very juſt; at the ſame time thinking he was properly puniſhed, for having preferred his late wife to her all accompliſhed ſelf. She never went into her fair charge's room, but to reproach her for her manifold crimes, in the bitterеſt manner, informing her, every time ſhe ſaw her, with the greateſt complacency, as if ſhe had been performing a very meritorious action, in tormenting this amiable creature, how much her father's reſentment was heightened againſt Dubois; and the more Mademoiſelle de Ceare was affected by her horrible accounts, the more this virtuous Nun enjoyed

the

the performance of her duty, as ſhe termed her friendly zeal.

A criminal ſuit was now inſtituted, with all the rigor the law would permit of, againſt the unfortunate Phyſician, and the Maſter of Requeſts learnt, with the greateſt regret, the firſt Preſident of the Parliament was to be his judge—not that he entertained any doubts of his integrity, but he dreaded, leſt he ſhould exert his wonted generoſity, and known lenity, in favour of the unhappy criminal, as he had ſaved the lives of many unfortunate beings, ſome of his colleagues would have condemned without heſitation, therefore, it was his great clemency occaſioned Mr. de Ceare's fears. But, according to the general cuſtom, as ſoon as he learnt he was to be his judge, he waited upon him, thinking it very eſſencial, to entreat him to do him juſtice, and to convince him of the enormity of Dubois's crimes, and that the public in general, nay, the welfare of the nation, was intereſted in his cauſe, ſince every diſtinguiſhed family in

France ran the ſame riſk he had done, though there had ſcarcely ever been an example like the preſent; it was therefore abſolutely neceſſary that Dubois ſhould be made an example of, to prevent other low wretches from forming ſimilar deſigns againſt the honour of ancient families; for was ſuch a daring villain to eſcape being broke upon the wheel, it would be a precedent for any raſcal to run away with the daughter of the firſt nobleman in the land with impunity; and Dubois was not only a ſeducer, but abſolutely a robber, and an aſſaſſin: not ſatisfied with having inveigled his daughter from his houſe, he had induced her to rob him, and had aſſaſſinated the poſtillion and ſervant who attended her upon the high road, merely to prevent the detection of his crimes; and all this was very eaſily proved, as the footman had only been dangerouſly wounded, and had made his eſcape; therefore, there could not remain a doubt but he wiſhed to have prevented any witneſs from appearing againſt him, even at the expence of murder, the moſt horrid of all crimes; of courſe,

it

it muſt be the moſt miſtaken lenity to let ſuch a villain eſcape unpuniſhed.

Notwithſtanding the falſity of theſe accuſations, Mr. de Ceare was fully convinced of the truth of them, for the traitor Champagne, having ſeen his whole project ſo compleatly overturned, by the unexpected arrival of Dubois, whom he inſtantly recollected, from having ſeen ſo much of him at St. * * *, and convinced, that as ſoon as the adventure became publick, he ſhould be diſcovered to have been the principal agent in Mademoiſelle de Ceare's flight, which he facilitated merely to ſerve his own wicked purpoſes more ſecurely, and of courſe knew he ſhould be hanged, if not broke upon the wheel; he laid his plan to avoid the approaching puniſhment, with more wickedneſs than prudence; his firſt object was to pre-poſſeſs Mr. de Ceare in his favour.

He had remained in the foreſt 'till he ſaw Dubois drive off with the chaiſe, and was

now convinced, from the road he took, Mademoiſelle de Ceare did not mean to return home; there was not any village near, he knew, and the horſes were too fatigued to get on very faſt, he therefore ſet out for Paris as hard as ever he could, though he was dangerouſly wounded in the ſhoulder; but his wiſh to ſave his own life, by criminating Dubois, gave him ſtrength and ſpirits, as he could only aſſert his own innocence, at the Phyſician's expence.

He arrived at Paris a few minutes after Mr. de Ceare, who was juſt returned out of Burgundy, ſooner than he at firſt intended. Champagne was not prepared for this meeting, but having a fertile brain at invention, and finding the Magiſtrate had already learnt the elopement of his daughter, he immediately told the other ſervants he brought news of her; they were all happy to appeaſe their maſter's exceſſive anger, therefore aſked no queſtions, but inſtantly conducted him to Mr. de Ceare, repeating what he had ſaid.

He

He flung himſelf at his feet, entreated his forgiveneſs, aſſuring him, he was perfectly innocent, and no way concerned in this terrible adventure. The Magiſtrate, already violently irritated, inſiſted upon knowing what he meant, "don't tell me of your innocence, tell me where my daughter now is?"

"She is, as far as I can be certain," ſays the wicked wretch, "travelling into Italy with Mr. Dubois, ſir, to recompenſe him for having ſaved her life at St. * * * *"

This explanation made Mr. de Ceare raving mad, almoſt; had he at that moment been maſter of the perſons of the pretended criminals, there is no doubt but he would have proceeded to any extremity againſt them, rather than have waited for the regular forms of juſtice; Dubois' life would have undoubtedly fallen a ſacrifice to his injured honour: but happily, this ſpeedy revenge not being in his power, he had recourſe to the

only means that remained, of bringing this hated mortal to juſtice, ſo, without ſtopping another moment, to make any further enquirie, he haſtened to the Lieutenant of the police, taking Champagne with him, where, having laid his complaint againſt the innocent criminal; he had the ſatisfaction of knowing, ſeveral parties of the Maréchauſſée were inſtantly ſent in purſuit of Dubois and Mademoiſelle de Ceare.

Champagne particularly deſcribed the place where he had left them, from which they might conjecture what road they had taken.

Mr. de Ceare was very laviſh in his promiſes to the different officers who commanded the little troops ſent in purſuit of the ſuppoſed fugitives, promiſing wonders to the one who ſhould reſtore his daughter to him, and who ſeized the criminal Phyſician, for whom no treatment was bad enough, nor any words

words ſufficiently ſtrong, to expreſs the horror he held him in.

He now deſired Champagne, in the preſence of the Lieutenant of the Police, to give him all the particulars of this ſtrange affair; upon which the perfidious wretch began as follows, with the greateſt humility and apparent penitence.

" I had the imprudence, ſir, to get drunk a few days ſince, with a party of friends, who prevailed upon me to aſk leave of the ſteward to go and ſee my relations, that I might have a little time to divert myſelf with them; ſo ſir, being in liquor, and over perſuaded, I followed their advice, and we ſet out for a village near Paris, to enjoy ourſelves, but my money was all ſpent yeſterday, ſo I reſolved to return home, finding they thought nothing of me then, and I could not bear to be laughed at and duped into the bargain; ſo I ſet out in the evening alone, and arrived at the garden gate very early this morning, and

thinking all would be quiet, not to diſturb any body, I intended to have climbed over the parapet wall, when ſeeing ſomebody come out of the gate with a little box under their arm, I ſtopped, very much ſurpriſed to ſee that gate open at ſuch a time of the morning; I ſtood not to be ſeen, and preſently ſaw the man who held the box, walk with it towards a chaiſe that ſtood at ſome diſtance; I now ſtept forward, and my aſtoniſhment increaſed when I ſaw Mademoiſelle de Ceare following the man; ſhe caught ſight of me, and ſeemed as much amazed as I was; I made a ſudden ſtop, and hardly knew whether to advance or retreat; but without allowing me time to decide, or to ſpeak a ſingle word, ſhe deſired me to follow her inſtantly, and ſhe would make my fortune; ſo being hardly ſober ſir, and not knowing what I did, I got up behind the chaiſe already mentioned, into which ſhe now got, though I only intended to ſee where ſhe went to, for I own my heart miſgave me immediately; I thought your honour did not know any thing about this

this expedition, ſo I thought I would learn all I could, to be able to give you ſome ſatisfaction, in caſe you were in ignorance of this journey, as I ſuppoſed, and if your honour did, you know I acted but right in obeying Mademoiſelle's orders. The poſtillion ſet off full ſpeed, and took a road I was not acquainted with, for he very ſoon left the high road, and about twelve o'clock we arrived in a very private part of the foreſt of Fontainebleau, as I before mentioned to the reader, and there we met Mr. Dubois and a ſervant, on horſeback; he inſtantly ſtopped the chaiſe, my young lady got out, and they had a long converſation together, which I could not underſtand, though, from their looks and geſtures I am convinced they did not agree, and I had ſtrong reaſons for this ſuppoſition afterwards, for Mademoiſelle ſaid, in a loud voice, "Oh Dubois, you have deceived me, to me go to my Aunt's, as I am reſolved I will not go any further with you;" but the wretch went on; he prayed he would, ſir, ſhe conſented, upon condition they ſhould

quit France immediately; for the money and jewels ſhe had with her, would ſupport them very handſomely in Italy, ſhe ſaid, if he exerciſed his profeſſion into the bargain; ſo having at laſt agreed upon this plan, ſhe got into the carriage again, and Mr. Dubois ordered the poſtillion to go on, mounting his horſe while he ſpoke, but the boy, after what he had heard, and from the ſigns I had made him, refuſed, as well as myſelf, to go forward, ſaying, this elopement might bring him into trouble. This refuſal put Mr. Dubois in a violent rage, and he ordered his ſervant to fling the boy off his horſe, and to take his place himſelf; but the poſtillion would not ſuffer that, as he was accountable for the carriage and horſes, he ſaid, and no one ſhould make him either go forward or diſmount, againſt his will; upon this Mr. Dubois ſeized him by the collar, and threatened to kill him on the ſpot, at the ſame time taking a piſtol from the holſters of his ſaddle, which frightened the boy ſo much, that he jumped down, and as the piſtol which Mr. Dubois had pointed

pointed at him went of, it miſſed the poſtillion and killed his own ſervant, who was ſtanding cloſe by, and going to enforce his maſter's orders; God to be ſure would have it ſo, but ſeeing what he had done, Mr. Dubois pulls out another piſtol, and ſhot the poſt boy dead; at this terrible ſight, ſir, I wiſhed to run away, but the murderer fearing, I ſuppoſe, I ſhould bring him to juſtice, having been a ſpectator of his crimes, jumped off his horſe, ſnatched another piſtol out of the holſters of his ſervants ſaddle, and running up to me, fired it at my head; but ſeeing him preſent, and the piſtol cocked, I tried to fall upon the ground to ſave myſelf, but he was too quick for me, and I received the contents in my ſhoulder: however, being cloſe to the ſervant's horſe, and in my fright, not feeling my wound, I inſtantly ſnatched out the other piſtol to defend myſelf, and in my rage fired it at him, but miſſed him, and only killed his horſe, which he had ran behind to ſave himſelf. Finding I had now an opportunity of making my eſcape, and none of defending my own life,

life, I jumped upon the ſervant's horſe, and rode off as faſt as I could, but as ſoon as I came to a turning in the wood, I ſtopped to watch him, and ſaw him take the poſtillion's place, and drive off with the chaiſe. As ſoon as he was out of ſight, I ſet off again as hard as ever I could for the laſt village, where I had my arm bound up, and then proceeded to Paris, on purpoſe to inform you of every thing I knew, ſir, concerning your daughter; and at firſt I thought of following the carriage, but finding myſelf weak and not armed, I gave up the thought."

Monſieur Cerne heard this recital with tolerable compoſure, and deſiring the Lieutenant of the police to receive Champagne's depoſition in form, he returned home with this villainous wretch, whom he ordered to bed, agreed he had acted bravely, only wiſhed he had ſtopped the villain, and had the villain ſecured; deſiring the family Surgeon and Phyſician might be ſent for, and every poſſible care taken of a man he owed ſo much to.

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Theſe orders given, he began to reflect upon what he had heard; he perceived his daughter's reputation was totally loſt, and that all his own projects were overturned; he blamed himſelf very ſeverely (for what he ought to have foreſeen much ſooner) that he had allowed Dubois to remain ſo long at St. * * *; a thouſand things ruſhed upon his mind at once; he thought, in ſome reſpects, he deſerved what had happened; had Dubois's profeſſion been rather more honourable, he would have married them the moment they arrived, but his ignoble name, and his father's mortar, did not allow him to think of repairing the breach his honor had ſuſtained that way; ſo notwithſtanding the tenderneſs he felt for his daughter, he determined ſhe ſhould take the veil, and as this barbarous reſolution coſt him a great deal, all his vengeance fell upon the innocent Dubois.

It was in this temper he received his daughter, upon her arrival at Paris, and in a ſtill worſe, he proceeded to the Preſident De

Ranſai's, in hopes of bringing this moſt worthy Judge over to his way of thinking; he was therefore very much diſappointed upon arriving at his Hotel, when the ſervant informed him he was gone to Corbeil, a village within a few leagues of Paris, where the Preſident had a very handſome villa. Mr. de Ceare, unwilling to loſe a moment, underſtanding the Preſident would not return 'till the next day, ſet out immediately for Corbeil, being ſufficiently acquainted with his judge, to take ſuch a liberty.

He found him, when he arrived, giving orders for the embelliſhment of his garden and pleaſure ground, and was received with the utmoſt politeneſs, and ſoon entered upon the buſineſs which had brought him. He perceived the Preſident's colour heighten conſiderably, the moment he mentioned the name of Rhubarbin and his ſon. Notwithſtanding this remark, he uſed, as may be ſuppoſed, the utmoſt energy, to endeavour to pre-poſſeſs the Preſident againſt the unfortunate

nate Dubois, but was evidently ſurpriſed when the Preſident, without hardly giving him time to conclude, exclaimed, with the greateſt vehemence,

" Yes, ſir, you are perfectly in the right, your's is a common cauſe, and I promiſe you you ſhall have juſtice done you; nothing ſurpriſes me in the people you complain of, you have to do with wretches, capable of any crimes, and I am convinced, I have not a doubt, but the ſon has imbibed all his culpable father's principles; you need not apprehend my clemency, ſir, which I know I am often blamed for; you ſhall have every ſatisfaction you have a right to demand, without being at all beholden to me, for I will acknowledge to you, that I am delighted; you have afforded me an opportunity of revenging myſelf upon this vile Apothecary, in doing nothing more than my duty, and in ſerving the publick. Would to God I could as eaſily prove the father's crimes, as you can the

the ſon's; but I ſhall, at leaſt, have the ſatisfaction of puniſhing one villain in the family."

The Maſter of Requeſts devoured every word that fell from the Preſident's lips, (whoſe agitation was inconceivable) though he could not gueſs their meaning, for he had never heard Mr. Rhubarbin had offended him; and the Preſident was too much agitated to permit him to aſk any explanation juſt then. He walked up and down the room with his arms folded, and ſeemed to have forgot any one was preſent, while Mr. de Ceare obſerved him in ſilent amazement, and liſtened, with increaſing aſtoniſhment, to the diſcourſe he held to himſelf, as he paſſed to and fro.

"Miſerable wretch," he exclaimed, "you will now feel, in your turn, the ſorrow of loſing a ſon; you will then, perhaps reflect, by experience, upon what you have made other fathers feel. Barbarian," he continued,

"what

" what have not I ſuffered through your inhumanity?"

This exclamation of the Preſident's, raiſed Mr. de Ceare's curioſity to ſuch a pitch, he could no longer refrain to aſk an explanation, he therefore addreſſed the Judge, ſaying,

" He was afraid theſe people were more criminal even than he had ſuſpected, and he was fearful, from the intereſt he ſeemed to take in his ſtory, he had been a ſufferer by them as well as himſelf."

" I have indeed, ſir," ſays the irritated Judge," ſtopping ſhort oppoſite Mr. de Ceare, " they have wronged me beyond all forgiveneſs; I am convinced my anger would not aſtoniſh you, were you acquainted with half what I have ſuffered through theſe barbarians; but I cannot explain this matter to you at preſent, it would take up too much time, for I ſhould be obliged to give you the hiſtory of my whole life, to make you comprehend

prehend how theſe vile wretches have deprived me of an only ſon."

The Preſident ſtopped, looked anxiouſly at Mr. de Ceare, put his hand to his forehead, and took another turn in the room, to recover his temper.

Mr. de Ceare expreſſed his ſorrow very feelingly, adding, "he wiſhed very much to know how they had perpetrated ſo daring a piece of villany."

"Really ſir, I would readily ſatisfy you," ſays the amiable Preſident, for ſuch he truly was, in every ſenſe of the word, "but my recital would neceſſarily be ſo long, it would be laying a very great tax upon your patience, who could not be ſo intereſted in it as I ſhould."

Mr. de Ceare, who had long been acquainted with the Preſident, though he was ſo much his ſuperior; was at times loſt

loſt in his own reflections; he knew he had had ſeveral children, who had all died very young, therefore he could not comprehend how Dubois, at ſo early an age, could have contributed to the loſs of them, as he certainly had not viſited them during their illneſs: beſides, the Preſident was too ſenſible a man, to have laid the fault of his childrens death upon the Phyſician who attended them; and he reflected, angry as he was with Dubois, Rhubarbin's reputation was too fair, to allow him to ſuſpect he had been the occaſion of the Preſident's loſs, at leaſt premeditatedly; had ſuch a thing been known, or even whiſpered, concerning his noble friend, he muſt have heard of it; therefore, every circumſtance redoubled his curioſity, and made him wiſh to fathom the Preſident's myſterious ſpeeches, if poſſible; he therefore aſſured the Judge, he was deeply intereſted in every event of his life, and that he particularly wiſhed he would favour him with an account of the crimes which had occaſioned the loſs of his ſon, proteſting he partook very

ſincerely

ſincerely of the ſorrow ſuch an event muſt naturally occaſion.

"You are very obliging ſir," ſays the Judge, who attributed to ſenſibility, what was merely the effect of curioſity in Mr. de Ceare; "but I repeat," continued the Preſident, "I muſt give you the hiſtory of my life, to explain this matter thoroughly, which I will do in as few words as poſſible; but as your time is precious, you had better diſpenſe with my recital, 'till you have more leiſure to hear it: at leaſt, if you wiſh me to commence hiſtorian immediately, you muſt not think of returning to Paris to night."

Mr. de Ceare thanked him very much for deigning to gratify his curioſity, ſaying, "no time, if he was not too encroaching, would be more agreeable than the preſent."

"Then accompany me into my ſtudy," ſays the Preſident, "and I will enter into details,

details, that will perhaps tire you, but which are unavoidable in my ſtory; only recollect, ſhould it excite ennui, you owe it to your own requeſt."

Mr. de Ceare, highly gratified, merely bowed, and attended the Preſident into a moſt elegant library, which evinced the taſte of its owner, and being ſeated, the Preſident began as follows, after having given orders not to be interrupted.

## CHAP. VI.

YOU know, ſir, that my father poſſeſſed the charge I now hold, during his life time—that he was immenſely rich, and that I was his only child. He brought me up to the law, wiſhing I ſhould ſucceed him, as I have done, and as I ſucceeded tolerably well in my ſtudies, my father's attachment increaſed daily for me, we therefore always lived upon the moſt friendly terms; and notwithſtanding the natural ſeverity of his temper, for which he

was

was noticed, finding, from the liberty which he allowed me, that I ſhould not make a bad uſe of money, he gave me up my mother's fortune, who died during my childhood, at twenty, not chuſing to avail himſelf of our laws, which would have permitted him to have retained it 'till I was five years older; but no ſooner had he been thus bountiful, than he preſſed me very much to marry, and propoſed a lady to me, whom he ſaid would juſt ſuit me. I was very young indeed, thought a marriage of convenience, without love, a horrible thing, therefore determined, in my own mind, never to give my hand without my heart; and after having been preſſed ſeveral times, upon the ſame ſubject, gave my father to underſtand as much; he ſeemed very much diſpleaſed, reproached me in gentle terms at firſt; blamed my romantic notions, as he termed them; however, he ſaid, he did not wiſh to force my inclination, by inſiſting upon my marrying a perſon I did not like; at the ſame time deſired me not to think of marrying merely

for love, that is, becauſe a woman might happen to ſuit my romantic fancy; aſſuring me, he ſhould never forgive ſuch a fooliſh ſtep; that I ought to conſider the birth, fortune, and connexions of a woman, before I talked of love, which never ſhould be a guide to people of an elevated rank: nay, love matches in general, he ſaid, were ſeldom ſo happy, as thoſe formed by prudence, or convenience.——We often reaſoned upon this important point, without being either of us convinced the other was in the right; therefore, I really believed at laſt, my father began to think I did not intend to marry at all, not believing me abſolutely ſincere in my notions about love, &c. as I perſiſted in remaining ſingle 'till I met with a lady, whoſe character and morals might enſure my future felicity. I had not then felt the power of the blind God, and began to fancy I never ſhould, ſo, you perceive, I argued from theory, and was determined not to marry 'till I really was, or at leaſt fancied myſelf, become one of his votaries. However, before I was five

and

and twenty, I discovered I possessed a heart, and that I had resigned it to another, when I least expected it.

Not long after the last conversation my father and I had upon matrimony, I presented myself one morning at his study door; and found his anti-chamber full of people, who were impatiently waiting to be introduced to him, therefore, seeing he was likely to be occupied for some time, I was returning into my own apartments, not wishing to interrupt him, when, upon looking round me, as I walked back through the crowd, I perceived sitting, in the farthest corner of the room, two ladies, who were engaged in earnest discourse; and as their eyes were fixed upon the door that opened into my father's study, I had a distinct view of their faces; the eldest seemed to have been a very handsome woman, though she looked excessively pale and dejected, so much so, that I really pitied her, presuming some unfortunate law suit had brought her there. The other

lady ſtruck me, as being the moſt beautiful creature I had ever ſeen; it would be uſeleſs to deſcribe her perſon to you, as ſhe is now my wife, and though on the wrong ſide of forty, there are ſtill great remains of that eminent beauty ſhe poſſeſſed at nineteen. The compaſſion I felt for her mother, redoubled, as I admired her beautiful daughter; the extreme reſemblance there was between them, left me no doubt of the relationſhip. I ſtopped to ſpeak to a gentleman I was acquainted with, for the ſake of contemplating this elegant girl. She and her mother were the only ladies who were waiting among a number of men, who were all come to ſolicit my father's favour and protection, in their various law ſuits, and who were too much occupied juſt then, by their own thoughts, to pay much attention to the fair ſex; I thought, therefore, they would not be ſorry to leave this crowd, ſo approaching them, entreated they would walk into a little room adjoining, ſet apart for the reception of people of diſtinction, while they waited for an audience. They felt my attention,

attention, and the mother thanked me in the politeſt manner; I remained with them, and was ſoon ſo much pre-poſſeſſed in their favour, I could not help offering them every aſſiſtance in my power towards introducing them to my father, which the elderly lady readily accepted, acknowledging to me, ſhe was exceſſively uneaſy about the ſucceſs of her law ſuit; therefore, after a few thanks for my politeneſs, ſhe informed me, (wiſhing to intereſt me in her favour, as well as my father) that ſhe was an Engliſh woman of family; that her father had been attainted for having fought in the cauſe of the Stuart family, and had flown to France for refuge, whither ſhe had followed him, though quite a child. That after the death of Lord ——, her father, her mother, who had remained in England, ſent for her back again, and died in her arms, ſoon after her return, after recommending her to ſome great relations, who took her under their protection, though they were exceſſively diſpleaſed at her perſevering to profeſs the

Catholick religion, (in which ſhe had been brought up) becauſe they were jealous Proteſtants. This made her ſituation very diſagreeable during a couple of years, at the end of which the Duke of N—— arrived in London, Ambaſſador from our court; he had brought in his ſuite a young Knight of Malta, of the name of D'Orvile, who having been introduced to her at her relation's, after a few interviews, declared his love, and offered her his hand, which ſhe immediately accepted, delighted at the thoughts of being reſcued from a ſtate of dependency, and ſhe alſo felt a mutual attachment for the gentleman.

This haſty marriage of Mr. D'Orville's, greatly offended the Ambaſſador, to whom he was related, who reproached him very ſeverely for his imprudence, which obliged him to renounce every advantage he had a right to expect from his order, which he was now forced to throw up, though it was in fact, the only thing he had to depend upon,

not

not having any fortune of his own, being the youngeſt ſon of a nobleman, whoſe eſtates all reverted to his eldeſt ſon, but too common a cauſe in France, where the younger branches of great families, have ſeldom any other reſource, except the church, or the order of Malta; and in fact, Mr. D'Orville's marriage not only deprived him of his croſs, his whole dependance; but prevented him from ever returning to France any more; his family were ſo irritated againſt him, that they refuſed either to ſee or hear from him, and even threatened to confine him for life, if he ventured to croſs the channel. He was therefore, being totally deſtitute, obliged to have recourſe to his wife's relations, who rather than ſee them ſtarve, though equally offended at the match, procured a ſmall place for him, after he had been naturalized, the revenues of which kept them above want. They had only this daughter, and had, in fact, lived very happily, 'till her huſband's death, which happened about two years before, ſince which, as his ap-

pointments had ſtopped of courſe, ſhe had merely ſubſiſted once more, upon the bounty of her relations; but having learnt, a few months before our meeting, that her huſband's eldeſt brother had died in France, without children, ſhe had been adviſed, and had come over to Paris, in hopes of obtaining his fortune for her daughter, who was, in fact, his next heir; but upon her arrival, ſhe found a very diſtant relation had taken poſſeſſion of all the eſtates, which obliged her to have recourſe to the law, to obtain juſtice. Her huſband had not left France like a fugitive, and they both always profeſſed the Catholic religion, which her daughter had been brought up in. But their greateſt difficulties aroſe, from being ſtrangers, without friends to obtain protectors, and almoſt without money: while their adverſary, on the contrary, was very opulent, and in great favour at court, which gave her reaſon to apprehend ſhe ſhould not ſucceed, though ſhe had evidently juſtice on her ſide.

Such

Such was the heads of a ſtory, I liſtened to with pain, and ſecretly applauded the ſimplicity with which it was told. I aſſured Madame D'Orville, I was convinced juſtice alone would guide my father; he was incapable of acting wrong. Whatever influence her adverſe party might poſſeſs at Court, it would avail him very little in a Court of Juſtice, and where my father preſided.

The poor mother was overjoyed, thanked me in the moſt feeling manner, aſſured me, I had afforded her the greateſt conſolation ſhe had met with ſince her arrival in France.

After ſome little time, I found my father was at liberty, I introduced both mother and daughter, and left them to explain the matter fully to him; he gave them a very long audience, and wiſhed to ſee them again. I put myſelf in their way as they came out of his apartment; the mother again thanked me for the interview I had procured her, I had been ſo ſtruck with their elegant ſim-

plicity, and genuine politeneſs, that I offered to ſee them home.

The amiable Madame D'Orville, overjoyed at her flattering proſpects, readily accepted my offer; I accompanied them to their apartments, the appearance of which convinced me they were far from rich; one ſervant compoſed their houſehold, a young girl, whom they had brought from England.

I entreated Madame D'Orville to permit me to renew my viſits; ſhe inſtantly conſented, imagining I might be of ſervice to them in their law ſuits; as I had meaſures to keep for their own intereſt, I did not dare mention the affair openly to my father, nor to preſs him in their favour. I therefore, having become quite intimate, and being more and more pleaſed every day with my new acquaintance, introduced them to ſeveral ladies of high rank, who poſſeſſed a great deal of credit at court, which they promiſed to employ in favour of the beautiful Engliſh woman,

woman, as they termed Madame D'Orville. I now had the pleaſure of ſeeing this young lady very often, either at theſe ladies, or at their own apartments, without the motives of my viſits being ſuſpected, though I was now moſt ſeriouſly and violently in love, and I may ſay, it was not to be wondered at, for if ever woman was perfect, Eugenia D'Orville was the favoured mortal; ſhe poſſeſſed every internal and external accompliſhment; for though her parents were not rich, they had cultivated her happy diſpoſition, by the beſt education in their power; and ſince their arrival at Paris, as Madame D'Orville thought her daughter's right to an immenſe fortune would ſoon be firmly eſtabliſhed, ſhe had given her ſeveral of the firſt maſters. Eugenia's principles were excellent, and in ſhort, in her were united every perfection.

Their ſuit was not judged ſo ſoon as they had flattered themſelves it would, becauſe it commenced juſt before the autumn vacation, it was therefore deferred 'till the November following,

following, and I had time, in the interim, to make an impreſſion upon Mademoiſelle D'Orville's heart.

Her mother perceived our mutual love, and far from oppoſing the progreſs of it, ſhe obſerved it with joy: ſhe was very much attached to me, and thinking her daughter would ſoon be a rich heireſs, it never entered her head that my father would have any objection to ſuch an alliance; and this generous woman meant to have made me an offer of her daughter's hand, the moment the ſuit was decided, of the ſucceſs of which, ſhe hardly retained a doubt.

I was totally ignorant of her obliging intentions, had I been acquainted with them, ſhould have been highly flattered, by ſo great a proof of her regard for me; though I muſt own, I was far from being ſo ſanguine in my hopes reſpecting her law ſuit as ſhe was, for my father, little thinking I was ſo intereſted in the buſineſs, often mentioned it to me, but always

always in rather an unfavourable manner; at the ſame time ſaying, he would do all in his power for theſe unfortunate people, as he ſtyled them, for he pitied them extremely. But his good-will met with an invincible obſtacle, that totally prevented its being of any uſe to them; when their ſuit came on the law was totally againſt them.

The Chevalier D'Orville had been naturalized in England, which their adverſaries had got proofs of, and theſe being produced, occaſioned the loſs of their cauſe.

The unfortunate ladies had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of this cruel event; they were preſent during the trial, and upon hearing judgment paſſ ' againſt them, with coſts, in a ſuit they had made themſelves ſo ſure of gaining, Madame D'Orville fainted, and was carried out of court, and conveyed to her own apartment, (where I arrived a few minutes after them) perfectly inſenſible.

If the ſituation I found the mother in, excited my pity, that of the daughter hurt me ſtill more; ſhe was bathed in tears, holding her mother in her arms, and endeavouring to reſtore her to her ſenſes, by the moſt tender careſſes. Elizabeth, their Engliſh maid, was half mad, declaring, that her poor miſtreſs was dead; that theſe good for nothing French folks had killed her. This melancholy ſight, and my reflections upon the occaſion of it, really brought tears into my eyes.

At laſt Madame D'Orville came to herſelf, and began to lament her misfortunes in terms, that would have melted the hardeſt heart, I therefore leave you to judge, ſir, what effect they had upon one ſo tenderly attached to them as mine was; never was I more affected, to my recollection, though I have experienced many more poignant ſorrows ſince. When ſhe was a little recovered, and we were alone,

"Now,"

"Now," ſays ſhe, looking at me, "my deluſive hopes have all vaniſhed; what muſt become of my dear Eugenia, reduced, as we are now, to the greateſt poverty."

I tried to conſole her, aſſured her ſhe ſaw every thing in the worſt light, proteſting, the loſs of her ſuit was incapable of changing my ſentiments, acknowledging, that I had never flattered myſelf ſhe would gain it, and that, without waiting the iſſue, I ſhould have offered my hand to her amiable daughter, had I been my own maſter, which ſhe knew was not the caſe, but that I was trying to bring my father over to my way of thinking, with regard to marriage, and had ſome hopes of ſucceeding, through his great deſire to ſee me ſettled.

I received a thouſand thanks from Madame D'Orville, and my ſpeech ſeemed to have calmed her ſpirits a little. Mademoiſelle D'Orville remained ſilent during our diſcourſe, but her eyes, and lovely countenance, expreſſed

expreſſed the pleaſure my aſſurances gave her, and confirmed me in the opinion of the ſupreme felicity I ſhould enjoy in the married ſtate, with ſuch a woman.

Having ſaid all I could think of, likely to calm their preſent diſtreſs, at laſt I took my leave, and determined to ſound my father the firſt opportunity, that I might diſcover, whether, in favour of birth and merit, he would overlook the trifling conſideration of riches, in any lady I might fix upon. I own I flattered myſelf, his wiſh to ſee me married, would go a great way in my favour, yet I never dared enter upon the ſubject myſelf, ſo I got one of my friends, whom I could depend upon, to tell him the firſt opportunity that offered, that he believed my repugnance for the marriage ſtate was very much diſſipated, nay, that he even thought I was in love with a lady he mentioned to him, who, like Mademoiſelle D'Orville, only wanted fortune to be every way a deſirable match for me, as her birth, beauty and merit, were uni

verſally

verſally acknowledged. I had deſired he would mention this lady, as to my father's particular knowledge, I had often viſited at her mother's.

He eaſily believed, therefore, what my friend ſaid; nay, I believe he ſuſpected I had employed him to come at his real ſentiments, for he was not eaſily duped; but far from approving of my pretended deſign, he flew into a moſt violent rage, ſo my friend was obliged to leave him, and to inform me of the bad ſucceſs of his commiſſion; what I expected, ſoon happened, for the next time my father and I met, he began thus:

"I am informed, ſir," with a countenance that ſufficiently expreſſed his diſapprobation, had he remained ſilent, "that you intend to marry Mademoiſelle Gauthier, who doth not poſſeſs fortune enough to pay for her admittance into a provincial convent, and that your romantic notions of love has made you conceive this marvellous project. But

But pray, ſir, did you ever expect, or ſuppoſe that I ſhould be blind enough towards your intereſt, to give my conſent to ſuch a prepoſterous match? or have you determined to run the riſk of my eternal diſpleaſure, which will indubitably follow ſuch a ſtep? and let me tell you, it ſhall coſt you dear, if you dare to perſiſt in ſuch abſurd notions; and more than that, ſir, I promiſe you you ſhall feel the weight of my reſentment, if you even dare to ſee Mademoiſelle Gauthier again. You know what power I poſſeſs; I ſhall have little difficulty in obtaining a lettre de cachet, which will confine you for life, or at leaſt, during my pleaſure."

I was obliged to remain ſilent 'till he ſtopped, and really was alarmed, ſeeing him in ſuch a paſſion, which I was far from expecting. I knew too well, how eaſily he could put his threats into execution; and I was ſtill more alarmed, when I reflected, to what dangers I might expoſe theſe unfortunate ſtrangers,

gers, who could not have half the reſources againſt his power, Mademoiſelle Gauthier had; this ſingle apprehenſion obliged me to diſſimulate more than ever with him, I therefore aſſured him, I would not marry the lady in queſtion, without his free conſent.

This declaration rather calmed him, he looked at me very ſtedfaſtly, ſaying, "you had better not, ſir, if you do, know what you have to dread from a father's reſentment."

I aſſured him once more, ſince he had ſuch a diſlike to Mademoiſelle Gauthier, I would not think of her any more, nor had I ever given her the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe I ever meant to offer her my hand. He had now quite recovered his temper, and ſaid, "he was happy to hear it, he knew he might depend upon my word, and was very glad to find I would adhere to reaſon, and be guided by him, who had my welfare very much at heart."

I now

I now retired, very much hurt at the oppoſition I foreſaw my ſentiments would always meet with from him; but even theſe reflections, bitter as they were, did not alter my former reſolution, never to form an engagement, contrary to the real ſentiments of my heart.

I went to bed, full of theſe diſagreeable thoughts, and they occupied my mind ſtrongly; I could not ſleep for ſome time, and had but juſt forgot myſelf at day break, when I was awoke by my valet, who approached the bed; ſurpriſed at his appearance thus early, I inquired what was the matter, and what he wanted. "My father had ſent him," he ſaid, "who wiſhed to ſpeak with me immediately."

I inſtantly ſlipped on my night gown and ſlippers, and proceeded to his apartment, wondering what he could want with me at ſuch an hour; I aſked if he was ill, and had been anſwered in the negative. To

be

be ſure, thought I, like myſelf he has been unable to ſleep, and has certainly diſcovered the real object of my love; ſuch were the agreeable reflections I made, while I haſtened to him.

As ſoon as I entered his dreſſing room, he obſerved the flurry I was in, but attributed it to my having been awoke ſo early, and ſo unexpectedly; then told me, very calmly, he was going into the country for a few days, and not chuſing to go alone, he wiſhed me to accompany him.

I was exceſſively ſurpriſed at this abrupt propoſal, which he, no doubt, perceived, but did not dare ſtart a ſingle objection; he informed me he ſhould ſet off immediately, ſo that I had not time, had the hour been more ſeaſonable, to pay the Engliſh ladies a viſit; indeed I hardly knew whether I ſhould dare have left the hotel for that purpoſe juſt then, had I met with an opportunity, for fear of renewing my father's ſuſpicions, and fixing them

them upon the very people I wiſhed to protect from his power, and I could not have a doubt but this journey had been planned, merely to get me into the country for a ſhort time; I therefore conſoled myſelf with the hopes of returning ſpeedily to Paris, from what my father had ſaid, flattering myſelf I ſhould be able to excuſe my apparent impolite behaviour to their ſatisfaction, convinced they would approve of my reaſons for acting as I did, when they were acquainted with them. But I was much longer abſent than I expected, for we ſpent near three weeks at a ſeat of my father's he was having put in repair.

When we returned, I hardly gave myſelf time to walk into the houſe, before I ſat out for their lodgings, but found the apartments, to my inexpreſſible diſappointment, ſhut up. I inſtantly inquired of their landlady where they were gone, ſhe informed me they had left their lodgings for fear of being arreſted for debts they could not pay, and

for her part, ſhe thought they had acted very wiſely, for her apartments were much above their purſe; nay, they had been obliged to ſell the greateſt part of their cloaths, to pay her the money they owed her.

I never was more ſenſibly hurt, than in hearing what theſe unfortunate ladies had ſuffered through my abſence, at ſo critical a period; had I but gueſſed their ſituation, or had I remained at Paris, I ſhould have ſatisfied this intereſted hoſteſs, but now it was too late, and I dare not ſhew my indignation to this woman, upon whom I could have revenged myſelf with pleaſure; but had I given way to my feelings, I ſhould have diſcovered to the wretch the intereſt I took in her late lodgers, and as ſhe moſt likely knew me, I was fearful of the conſequences, I therefore merely reiterated my queſtion (with an aſſumed indifference, which coſt me much pain at the time) of, where they had moved to. She really did not know, ſhe reply'd, it had not

concerned her ſince ſhe was paid her due.—I was therefore obliged to leave her, without any hopes of again meeting with the objects of my ſearch, when fortunately, on my return home, I met Elizabeth, their maid, who was on her return to them with ſome proviſions ſhe had been ſent to buy, after the markets were over, that ſhe might get them cheap. The ſight of this poor girl revived my drooping ſpirits; ſhe ſeemed ſurpriſed, and the contents of her baſket, when I aſked her what ſhe had got there, convinced me but too well, of the abſolute poverty of theſe two amiable women. This good girl was truly attached to her miſtreſs, and ſeemed to pity them very much. I begged her inſtantly to conduct me where they lived, for I was all impatience to ſee them. As they wiſhed to be very private, the poor innocent girl hardly knew what to do, having been ordered not to inform any one of their ſituation, or where they lodged; but I preſſed her to make haſte, aſſuring her I would take all the blame upon myſelf.

myſelf. She therefore agreed to let me accompany her home.

Their miſery far exceeded the moſt horrid ideas I had formed of it; I found them in a little low room, or more properly ſpeaking, a cellar, black with ſmoke, and almoſt totally dark. A miſerable flock bed, without any curtains; four old chairs, and a broken table, compriſed the furniture of this wretched apartment. Being about three o clock in the afternoon, I believe, it ſtruck me with the more horror, for the only light there was, proceeded from a ſtinking lamp, which was hanging over the chimney, by the miſerable twinkling it gave; after having been there a few ſeconds, I was able to diſcover the bed, already deſcribed, upon which was laying the unfortunate mother; her lovely daughter, bathed in tears, and too much abſorbed in grief to notice my entrance, was ſeated by her. Judge what my feelings were? I can hardly think of that moment now, without

horror. Madame D'Orville perceived me the firſt, and addreſſed me in a very weak faint voice,

"What can have brought you to ſuch a miſerable place as this, ſir?"

I was ſo ſhocked and amazed, I had loſt the power of utterance, and ſhe went on in a voice ſcarcely audible.

"I foreſaw, ſir, how far we might depend upon the friendſhip of a man of your conſequence; we loſt all we once hoped to poſſeſs, and you, like the reſt of our friends, abandoned us; I don't mean to reproach you, ſir, but what can have induced you to ſearch us out now? I am ſurpriſed you ſhould chuſe to break in upon our ſolitude thus unrequeſted and ſo abruptly; you certainly only mean ſtill farther to inſult us, pray leave us, this place will only revive diſagreeable reflections—I deſire you would withdraw."

I was

I was far from being offended by theſe reproaches, which I apparently deſerved for my late neglect of them. I approached the bed ſtill nearer, unable to reſtrain my tears, and begged the good lady, in the firſt place, to allow me to offer her my purſe. She ſmiled at me diſdainfully, and ſhook her head, ſaying, "no, ſir, *allow me* to refuſe it," and her amiable daughter's looks convinced me my propoſition had offended her as much as it had her mother; but, againſt her will I ſeized her trembling hand, which I carried to my lips, and then addreſſed Madame D'Orville.

"Is it poſſible, Madam, you can refuſe a ſon ſo ſlight a favour? you cannot have forgot the hopes you allowed me to entertain ſome time back; why would you puniſh me for an involuntary abſence? during which I have ſuffered, mentally, as much as you poſſibly can have done, and which has, by no means, altered my ſentiments; I proteſt,

Madam, I would marry your charming daughter to-morrow, if it was not for my father, whose resentment alone I fear, and you must know, not without reason."

I thought I perceived this speech relieved them both; the mother looked at me with hope and fear blended upon her countenance, and her lovely daughter turned from me to hide her confusion. Seeing they did not wish to interrupt me, I proceeded to inform them of the conversation I had with my father, the evening preceding my departure, assuring them I had not the slightest idea, when I last saw them, of my precipitate journey, which so soon followed, but I was pretty well convinced my father had merely planned it to remove me for some time from the lady he thought I was in love with.

"Since you are so well acquainted with your father's inflexible severity, sir," says the good

good old lady, "what hopes can you now entertain of ſoftening him in your favour?"

"None at all, Madam, the only hope that I dare to cheriſh, is, that you will condeſcend to conſent to your lovely daughter and me being married privately; I am at an age, you know, that will prevent the marriage being diſſolved by the laws of this country, ſhould it be diſcovered, and I am certainly old enough to pleaſe myſelf: ſtill I don't wiſh to offend my father, for fear of the fatal effects of his firſt fury; I therefore wiſh it might be kept a ſecret for ſome time at leaſt, much more through the fear I entertain of his reſentment, than through any dread of his diſpoſing of his fortune contrary to my intereſt, and his preſent intentions in my favour; therefore, it remains with you to decide, Madam, whether you will make me ſupremely happy; at all events, I hear ſwear never to marry any other woman but your daughter,

you will force me to a life of celebacy, by your refuſing to conſent to my propoſals."

I perceived the tears trickling down her pale cheeks and was not able to reſtrain my own; I took her hand, which was laying without ſide the bed, and preſſed it to my lips, ſaying,

"Let me hope, in future, you will treat me as your ſon, and allow me to repair my apparent neglect."

After ſtarting many objections, which I endeavoured to obviate, ſhe conſented to accept my offer, if it was agreeable to her daughter.

I next propoſed they ſhould immediately quit their horrid habitation, confident this would be a more proper ſubject than any other I could chuſe juſt then. They ſaid they did not know of any place of retreat, I therefore begged they would accept of a ſmall houſe I had

had in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, which I ſometimes occupied myſelf; that it was quite retired, and ſtood in the middle of a garden, which made it as rural as if it had been a hundred miles from the metropolis.

Madame D'Orville abſolutely refuſed this offer, ſaying, "ſhe was afraid ſome unforeſeen event might awaken my father's ſuſpicions, and lead him to gueſs the real object of my love, were they to accept it," ſo I was obliged to give up to her ſuperior reaſon. I then entreated they would make themſelves as comfortable as they could 'till the next day, when I would ſee them again, being obliged to ſhorten my viſit, to prevent my father from queſtioning me concerning my long abſence. He took no notice, however, when I ſaw him, of the hurry I appeared in to ſet out the moment I arrived, attributing it, I believe, to my wiſh to ſee ſome of my young friends, to whom he knew I was exceſſively attached.

The next day when I returned, I found Madame D'Orville worſe than I had left her the day before, and after a few of the uſual inquiries, ſhe begged to know if I had reflected upon our late converſation, and whether I ſeriouſly wiſhed to unite my deſtiny to her daughter's.

I aſſured her I had ſpoke my real ſentiments, and was ready to fulfil every promiſe I had made.

" I believe you very ſincere, ſir," ſays ſhe, " but if you wiſh me to have the ſatisfaction of calling you my ſon, you have no time to loſe. Her preſent protectreſs will ſoon leave this world, and the only conſolation ſhe now can feel, will be the certainty that ſhe will leave her under your's. Yet don't let what I have ſaid, induce you to anſwer me precipitately, conſult your own heart well, ſir, before you determine; you will have great difficulties, I fear, to encounter. Are you

rich enough? that is one object you have to reflect upon, as your marriage, ſhould it be diſcovered, may deprive you of your father's inheritance. The next is, are you ſufficiently in love with my daughter, to take her without fortune, and without any hopes of ever receiving any from her relations?"

I would have ſpoke, but ſhe waved her hand, and went on,

"I muſt entreat, ſir, pity may not have any ſhare in your anſwer; only determine as ſpeedily as you can, conſiſtently with prudence. I have one reſource left for my Eugenia, I can get her received into a convent, through the intereſt of my Confeſſor, where young ladies are taken in, and allowed to profeſs, without bringing any fortunes, as they ſupport the convent by their work and different talents. I will allow, ſir, that this is my only, and my laſt reſource, but that will be much preferable to being united to a man ——"

Here

Here I could not help interrupting her, but before I could get her to liſten to me, the very Confeſſor, juſt mentioned, made his appearance. His countenance convinced me he was worthy the confidence Madame D'Orville placed in him; he was aſtoniſhed at ſeeing me there, but as he wiſhed to ſpeak in private to the ſick lady, Mademoiſelle D'Orville and I retired to the fartheſt corner of the miſerable room, that they might be at liberty to diſcourſe, in a low voice, without being over heard.

I was exceſſively happy in having this favourable opportunity of ſpeaking to the lovely Eugenia alone; and never was there a more tender, or a more melancholy converſation between two lovers; ſhe thanked me in the moſt affecting manner for my good opinion of her, but urged the ſtrongeſt reaſons againſt our marriage; repreſented to me the imprudence of it, particularly on my ſide, as ſhe could never make

me

me amends for ſuch a ſacrifice, and declared it was very much againſt her will, her mother had held the preceding converſation with me, proteſting ſhe could not bear the thoughts of being the occaſion of a quarrel between my father and me; ſhe knew his power, and dreaded his anger, and my love for her ought not to make me forget my duty towards a parent, who had a right to expect and command my obedience.

Theſe diſintereſted ſentiments, that flowed ſpontaneouſly from her ſoul, produced an effect very contrary to her intentions; had I been undeceived before, (which was far from being the caſe) this converſation would have determined me to have married her in ſpite of every obſtacle that ſeemed to oppoſe our union.

Madame D'Orville very ſoon entreated I would be ſo kind as to approach the bed, and in the preſence of this worthy prieſt,

prieſt, ſhe repeated the greateſt part of what ſhe had ſaid before his arrival, and concluded by ſaying, ſhe hoped for my anſwer before his departure, as the extremity ſhe was in, did not admit even of that delay ſhe owed to delicacy, and ſhe could not leave this world with ſatisfaction, 'till ſhe knew what would be her dear Eugenia's future ſituation in life.

Indeed I was but too well convinced, from appearances, we ſhould ſoon have this amiable woman's loſs to deplore. "I only wiſh, Madam, I could make your daughter mine at this very moment, were it only to convince you of the ſincerity of my intentions."

"You are too good, ſir," ſays Madame D'Orville, "and was it poſſible, I own I ſhould like to ſee her married before I die, and to beſtow my bleſſing, all I have to give, upon you both, but I fear it can't be delayed, the ceremony muſt be performed to day, if I am to be thus bleſſed, otherwiſe I

am

am informed, ſhe muſt ſet off immediately to take poſſeſſion of the place this worthy gentleman has been ſo kind, at my requeſt, to procure for her, and I would not have preſſed you for your anſwer ſo ſpeedily ſir, but he informs me he is obliged to ſet out for Lyons in a couple of days at fartheſt, and he cannot be anſwerable for any thing after his departure, nor do I think I ſhall live ſo long if he could; ſo once more let me entreat you would examine your own heart thoroughly, before you decide upon ſuch an important affair."

Her breath was quite ſpent, and her ſtrength ſeemed totally to fail her, as ſhe concluded.

" I am perfectly decided, Madam, and intend to marry your amiable daughter immediately, if this good gentleman will but facilitate the means, unknown to my father. I am of an age, ſir," turning to the prieſt,

" to

" to diſpoſe of my own perſon, and am now in poſſeſſion of my mother's fortune, which is ſufficiently conſiderable to ſatisfy my deſires, ſhould my father deprive us of his."

" Theſe are noble ſentiments ſir," ſays Madame D'Orville, in an audible whiſper, and put out her hand to me, " and if my daughter deſerves your affection, ſhe ought to be ſatisfied with being your wife, without wiſhing to declare it publickly, while you wiſh to keep your marriage a ſecret. Her reputation will be in your care, and ſhe ought to conform to your will; ſhe has been a moſt dutiful daughter, and I hope ſhe will make as good a wife. This gentleman will perform the ceremony, I am convinced, upon my account and at my requeſt.

Since the good man was ſoon to leave Paris, I thought he could not have any thing to fear from my father's reſentment, though I knew, ſhould he ever diſcover the matter, it would be

be extended upon all thoſe who had had any concern in it; I therefore readily accepted the ſervices of the worthy prieſt, which were offered in the moſt obliging manner.

"Madame D'Orville had fatigued herſelf," he ſaid, "but he did not think her in ſuch immediate danger as ſhe apprehended, he therefore wiſhed to poſtpone the ceremony till the next day, that he might be able to procure the neceſſary diſpenſations to inſure its validity, which he was certain of obtaining in that time, being the intimate friend of the Grand Vicar."

He ſucceeded ſo well, that every thing was ready that evening; he had even obtained permiſſion for us to be married at whatever church, and by whatever prieſt we choſe. He had a friend who was Curate of St. Roch, which was the neareſt pariſh church from theſe ladies' wretched apartment, we therefore choſe it for the ceremony, which was performed

performed by our friend the next morning very early.

Madame D'Orville, though dying, entreated to be carried thither in a chair, ſaying, "She only wiſhed to ſee her daughter married, then ſhe ſhould die in peace."

Every thing was conducted with the utmoſt ſecrecy, and ſucceeded to our wiſhes, but Madame D'Orville, who had leſs conſulted her ſtrength than her love for her daughter, could not ſuſtain the effort ſhe had made, and it was with the greateſt difficulty ſhe was prevented from fainting during the ceremony.

She wiſhed to have ſtaid to have heard maſs, but was not able, ſo ſhe was carried home the moment the nuptial benediction was beſtowed upon us, and put to bed, but was ſo fatigued, it was ſome time before ſhe was able to ſpeak.

We

We ſoon followed her, and her joy at ſeeing us ſeemed once more to animate her feeble frame. She made us a ſign to approach, and beſtowed the moſt fervent bleſſing upon us both, and when ſhe was a little recovered, gave her daughter ſome excellent advice, which ſhe continued, 'till ſhe expired in her arms about two hours after we were united.——Here I muſt pauſe.——

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

# COUNT St. BLANCARD.

# COUNT

# ST. BLANCARD,

## OR, THE

# Prejudiced Judge,

*A NOVEL.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

*BY MRS. MEEK.*

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# COUNT ST. BLANCARD.

## CHAP. I.

THE Preſident reſumed his diſcourſe; "I leave you to judge, ſir, of my wife's ſorrow, I really believe, but for her recent engagement, ſhe would hardly have ſurvived her tender mother. I was now exceſſively embarraſſed what to do with her, not chuſing to leave her near the body, and yet not knowing whom to truſt her with, as I was obliged to return home, becauſe my father gave a great dinner, which I could not diſpenſe myſelf from appearing at. I was relieved at laſt from my

perplexities, by the worthy prieſt who had united us; he undertook to place my wife in a convent, under the care of ſome ladies, who were already acquainted with both the mother and daughter. He inſtantly ſet off for this Abbey, while I uſed my utmoſt endeavours to conſole my wife. He ſoon returned, ſaying, the Abbeſs had ſent Mademoiſelle D'Orville a very particular invitation, and entreated ſhe would make uſe of her houſe, 'till ſhe was provided with another aſylum. Elizabeth was therefore immediately diſpatched for a hackney coach, and as ſoon as it arrived, this good man ſet off with my wife and this girl, for the convent.

It was thus I ſpent my wedding day; we were ſeparated almoſt as ſoon as we were united, which, in ſome reſpects, ſeemed to prognoſticate the misfortunes we have met with ſince. I felt the hardſhip of thus parting with my bride, very ſeverely, but her recent loſs prevented her from feeling it of much

much as ſhe would have done in any other ſituation.

I waited in their horrid apartment the return of the Prieſt and Elizabeth, and gave the former a ſufficient ſum to defray the expences of the funeral, &c. I then returned home, ſincerely regretting the loſs of a woman I had ſo high an eſteem for, and upon reflecting that I was deprived of my only comfort; though I endeavoured to appear gay and unconcerned at dinner, yet ſeveral of the company perceived my want of ſpirits; I attributed it to a ſtupid head ach, and they were kind enough to ſay, my conſtant ſtudies certainly affected my health; my father ought to prevent me from devoting ſo much time to them.

I dared not go near my wife the next day, being too well known in the convent ſhe was in, I therefore occupied myſelf in preparing her a lodging. I have already told you I had a houſe in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine,

the garden of which communicated with that of another large houſe in an adjoining ſtreet, which alſo belonged to me, and which I uſually let, reſerving the ſmall one for my own uſe, as I very often ſlept there ſince my father had given me up my mother's fortune, of which, theſe two houſes formed a part, and I was fond of the ſmall one, becauſe of its rural ſituation, and its being remarkably private, which ſuited the ſtudies I purſued.

As my father was acquainted with my reaſons for preſering this retreat to his hotel, he never took any notice of my being abſent evening and morning, though I believe at firſt he ſuſpected I kept a miſtreſs at my private apartment; but he convinced himſelf he was miſtaken; I fancy curioſity was one of his failings, though he never choſe to oppoſe my wiſhes in any thing except marriage, nor had he for ſome years.

I never

I never took but one ſervant with me to my private houſe, which I called my Hermitage, and he never ſlept there, being a married man, and his wife living very near; beſides, I ſeldom ever eat or drank there, more than a diſh of coffee for breakfaſt, or a glaſs of wine and a cruſt of bread for ſupper. I therefore determined to eſtabliſh my wife in the large one, the front of which looked into the Rue * * *, becauſe the houſes were ſeemingly quite detached from one another, for to prevent my having any communication with the inhabitants of the large one, I had divided the garden by a high wall, and had parted off the cellars, which alſo joined in the ſame manner; but I had left a door in this laſt partition which I had ordered, in caſe the proprietors of the great houſe ſhould want more cellar room, that I might be able to give up one of thoſe I had reſerved for myſelf, without knocking down the wall.

I therefore inſtantly ordered the large houſe, which was fortunately empty, to be

put in order, as if ſomebody was coming to take poſſeſſion of it. It was very ſoon ready, and at the end of ſix days after her mother's death, our good old friend, who had poſtponed his journey upon our account, went himſelf to fetch my wife out of the Convent, to conduct her to this houſe, where I impatiently waited her arrival alone; he diſmiſſed the hackney coach before they were in ſight of the houſe, which he entered by the help of a key I had given him. Elizabeth accompanied them indeed ſhe was the only one in our confidence, I was not far from the door when they entered, and as ſoon as it was ſhut, I ran to embrace the lovely mourner. She ſeemed exceſſively glad to ſee me, though ſhe ſhed a torrent of tears, which had hardly ever ceaſed, the good prieſt ſaid, ſince her mother's death; and the ſight of me renewed them in abundance, but my preſence, and the exhortations of the good prieſt, ſoon calmed her mind. He ſtaid ſupper with us, gave us the certificate of our marriage, &c. after which he

he took his final leave of us, meaning to ſet out early the next morning for Lyons.

Could I have followed my own inclinations, I ſhould never again have quitted my wife, but as this was not the caſe, to avoid ſuſpicion, I returned to my father's the next day, though rather later than uſual; I was not afraid of his forming any, while my ſolitude was free from myſtery, but now every thing alarmed me, I therefore really inhabited my hermitage leſs than before I had ſuch powerful motives to draw me thither. I wiſhed to make my wife's retreat as agreeable as poſſible, (as ſhe hardly ever left the houſe, except to go to maſs, and then ſhe went very early, and quite diſguiſed) I therefore provided her with a piano forte, and books in abundance. I ſhould have told you, I never entered the houſe ſhe inhabited, by the great door, but always went to my own private houſe, diſmiſſed my ſervant as uſual at night, telling him what time to come in the morning; I then viſited my wife through the cellar

door which had been made for the convenience of the great houſe; it therefore now only faſtened on their ſide, and I uſed to announce my arrival by a bell which I had hung for that purpoſe. My meaſures being ſo well taken, I flattered myſelf I ſhould be able to conceal my marriage from the world, for I did not preſume I ſhould be able to make it publick during my father's life time. My wife, very far from repining at her ſolitude, ſeemed exceſſively happy; her love for me increaſed daily, and I am ſure, mine for her was in the ſame predicament. Elizabeth was the only perſon who ever went out, or who ever let me in, when I rung my bell.

We continued to live thus happily during eight months. My wife, who was now far gone with child, ſaid ſhe would ſuckle the infant herſelf, by way of amuſement. I expected this fruit of our union with the greateſt impatience, as I adored its lovely mother more and more every day: ſhe was in excellent health and ſpirits within two months of her

her time, and I had not the ſlighteſt conception that I ſhould be obliged to abſent myſelf from Paris for four and twenty hours at a time: when one day, having ſlept at home, my father ſent for me very early in the morning, as he uſually did, if he had any thing of importance to ſay to me; I inſtantly obeyed his orders; he told me that one of his tenants in Portou, who owed him a great deal of money, had failed, and that he wiſhed very much to know, in what ſtate of predicament the fellow's affairs ſtood; he therefore intended to ſend me down, to make inquiries concerning them.

This commiſſion, by no means pleaſed me; to ſet out for a place near one hundred leagues from Paris juſt then, did not coincide with my inclination, I therefore endeavoured to diſſuade him from his purpoſe, alledging ſeveral excuſes for my non-compliance with his orders, which were of no avail; one or other of us muſt go, he ſaid, and he flattered him-

ſelf I ſhould think I was moſt capable of undergoing the fatigue of ſuch a journey.

Finding he was bent upon my departure, I ceaſed to contradict him, conſoling myſelf with the idea, that whatever we might both feel from this temporary ſeparation, I ſhould, at all events, be back in time for my wife's laying in.

My father occupied me all day with putting in order the different papers I was to carry with me, as he gave me ſeveral other commiſſions, which I was to execute at the ſame time; he never quitted me, but made me take duplicates of every thing, which ſo employed me, I could not find a moment to run into the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, and when I had done, it was ſo late, I was certain my wife would not expect me that night, could I have got out unobſerved, which was not poſſible, I knew, and my father kept giving me inſtructions how to proceed in the buſineſs I was going upon, 'till we parted for

for the night; and by his orders, my chaiſe was to be at the door by break of day; he was always very punctually obeyed, and as ſoon as I was dreſſed, I went, by his deſire, to take my leave of him, as he told me over night he might perhaps think of ſomething elſe after he was in bed, but his real reaſon was, I believe, a with to convince himſelf I adhered to his commands.

Having bid him adieu I ſet of; my own valet, who always attended me at my Hermitage, accompanied me on horſeback. As the road I was to take lay directly oppoſite from the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, as ſoon as I was out of ſight of my father's hotel, I ſtopped the poſtillions (determined not to leave Paris without taking leave of my wife) telling my man I had forgot ſomething at my own houſe, which I muſt take with me, alighting while I ſpoke, and deſiring him and the poſtillions to wait at ſome publick houſe 'till I returned.

I made the beſt of my way into the Faux-bourg St. Antoine, haſtened to the cellar door, rang the bell, and was ſoon admitted. I found my wife in bed, and very much ſurpriſed, as well ſhe might, to ſee me at ſo early an hour; but her amazement was ſoon changed into grief, when ſhe learned the reaſon of my unexpected viſit; all I could ſay could not comfole her.

"Till now I have been one of the happieſt of women," ſaid ſhe, "and I flattered myſelf that my mother's death was the greateſt misfortune that would ever befal me, but now I find my error; you muſt go, and I ſhall never be able to ſupport your abſence; I feel now as if I was certain I ſhould never ſee you again."

I did all in my power to calm her ſorrow, aſſuring her I ſhould not be abſent more than a month at fartheſt, and I hoped to be back much ſooner, as I was determined not to reſt 'till I had finiſhed the buſineſs I was going upon;

upon; at laſt we was obliged to part, and ſhe accompanied me to the private door, where we ſeparated with the greateſt reluctance on both ſides.

I ſoon arrived where my carriage was, which I hardly ever quitted, 'till I arrived at the ſeat I was going to. When I got there, I found the man's affairs, my father had ſent me to ſettle, in moſt terrible diſorder, and that ſeveral law ſuits were likely to be the reſult of his unjuſt dealings. I was obliged to make myſelf maſter of the different claims, and though I loſt no time, I ſoon found I ſhould not be able to return in a month, as I had hoped; and having wrote my father an account of the ſtate I found things in, I ſoon received his orders to commence two different ſuits immediately, and to remain there 'till they were judged, as I knew how to bring them to a ſpeedy concluſion. I was more perplexed than ever, but did not know how to help myſelf; I was therefore obliged to conform to his wiſhes, and by way of conſoling

ſoling my wife for my abſence, I wrote to her every poſt day, and received her anſwers as punctually: they were always full of her impatience to ſee me. Not being able to get on ſo faſt as we had hoped, and as I repeatedly wrote to my father to aſſure, nay, to convince him, I could no longer be of any uſe where I was; at laſt I received his permiſſion to return, and I muſt own, I could not perceive what great neceſſity there had been for my taking this journey, as I was convinced, very ſoon after my arrival at the old dreary caſtle, my father muſt have known the inutility of it at the very time he diſpatched me in ſuch haſte; many of my commiſſions were frivolous, and might have been done by letter; however, I ſet out on my return to Paris, without troubling my head to fathom the reaſon of his odd proceedings; indeed I was too happy to think of any thing but the joy I felt at the idea of once more ſeeing my wife. I had been abſent about ſix weeks, and what gave me the greateſt pleaſure, I was certain I ſhould arrive before my

my wife laid in, and I knew how happy my preſence would make her at that awful moment.

I thought all the poſt horſes crawled, though my exceſſive liberality made the poſtillions do all in their power to ſatisfy my impatience, but ſtill, they by no means kept pace with my impetuoſity, however, I ought not to have complained. But juſt after I had entered the foreſt of Chatelherault, four men maſked, and on horſeback, preſented themſelves, two on each ſide of the carriage, while two others ſtood over the poſtillions, holding a piſtol to their heads, and threatening to kill them if they offered to advance a ſtep. Not doubting but they were robbers, I inſtantly ſeized my piſtols, thinking, if I was fortunate enough to kill one, the others would run away in their fright, moſt likely. I took my aim at the firſt, but my piſtols both flaſhed in the pan; this accident made me very uneaſy, as I thought it would make them more furious, and that I ſhould moſt likely be

murdered; determined, notwithſtanding, to make the beſt defence in my power, I had recourſe to my ſword, which I had alſo in my chaiſe. I made a thruſt at one of them, but before I could recover it, it ſnapt juſt at the hilt, without doing any miſchief; every thing ſeemed to combine againſt me, I thought, and this freſh diſappointment quite enraged me, as my only reſource was now in their mercy, for my valet rode off full ſpeed upon their firſt appearance, and the poſtilions ſat very quiet, trembling for their own lives. I now preſented them with my purſe, thinking that was what they wanted, and with every thing of value I had about me, to induce them to ſpare my life, but what was my ſurpriſe, to find my offers diſdained, and to hear them aſſure me they did not want my money, nor did they intend to hurt me, deſiring me only to get out of the chaiſe.

I was obliged to obey them, and as ſoon as I was upon the ground, they tied my hands behind me, and a double handkerchief over my

my eyes; they then made me get into a coach which came up in a few minutes, upon one of them giving a whiſtle, and two of the fellows I took for robbers, got into it with me, and ſeated themſelves on each ſide of me, as a guard, I preſumed, though my hands were tied, as they ſeemed equally fearful of hurting me, or of letting me eſcape, entreating at the ſame time I would not be alarmed, aſſuring me, in the moſt reſpectful terms, that my life was in perfect ſafety.

"Then what have I done? and where am I going?"

To theſe interrogations they made no anſwer. I then attempted to induce them to ſet me at liberty, making them promiſes capable of tempting any body but the incorruptible people I had to deal with; and at laſt one of them anſwered, in the name of all, aſſuring me it was not in their power to comply with their wiſhes, but I might conſole myſelf

myſelf with the certainty, that my confinement would not laſt long.

"Did they know me?" I inquired, "had not they made a miſtake? I did not think I was the perſon they ought to have ſeiz..."

"They believed I was, but they could not anſwer any queſtions I might put to them; they would aſſure me I had nothing to fear."

I could only ſuppoſe I was a ſtate priſoner, and tried to reflect what I could have done to have brought myſelf into that predicament; at laſt, after about three hours drive, as near as I could gueſs, the coach ſtopt, and they deſired me to get out, taking hold of me to guide me, as they neither untied my hands, nor uncovered my eye, 'till I reached a ſumptuous apartment, which ſeemed prepared for ſome ſtate priſoner of diſtinction.

It was a very ſpacious room, magnificently furniſhed, with three windows on one ſide of it, which were parted off from the room by a ſtrong iron railing, not unlike a convent grate, that reached from the cieling to the ground.

I was now more convinced than ever, that I was right in my firſt conjecture. There was ſpace ſufficient left to walk between the grating and the windows, which were now ſhut, and four wax candles ſtood upon a table under one of them, ſo that though they gave me light, I could not touch them; I preſumed, from this precaution, they thought I was ſo bent upon making my eſcape, I ſhould fire my priſon rather than fail.

In a few minutes there was an excellent ſupper ſet upon the table before me, by the very people who had conducted me thither: indeed they ſeemed determined to allow me the enjoyment of every thing but that which I prized above all others, my liberty. I could not

not conceive what all thoſe precautions meant, nor even gueſs why I was ſtopped; I thought they certainly muſt have miſtaken me for ſomebody elſe, as my father alone could have taken ſuch a liberty with me, and he could only have been induced to act in this manner by the diſcovery of my marriage, which I was convinced he was ſtill ignorant of, as I had received a letter from my wife the very day before I left my father's old caſtle, and ſhe would certainly have known, if he had made any diſcoveries of that kind, as he would moſt likely have informed her, and very probably have queſtioned her as to the truth, before he proceeded in ſo violent a manner; therefore, the more I reflected, the more I was convinced I had been taken for ſome man of family they chooſe to confine; but without being able to verify my conjectures, I was obliged to take patience, and having ſupped (not that my appetite was very keen) I went to bed; I did not enjoy a very comfortable repoſe, for I was exceſſively hurt when I reflected how uneaſy my wife would be,

be, when ſhe found I did not arrive at the time I had appointed, and in not hearing from me; for if I could have wrote to her, I dared not have truſted my letter in the hands of my gaolers, and it was uſeleſs to aſk when my confinement would ceaſe, though I unfeelingly put the queſtion to one or other of the people who attended me, every day.

I never ſaw but the ſame four, who had firſt approached my chaiſe in the foreſt, and they always appeared as they did then, maſked. I was often tempted to have pulled them of, that I might diſcover who they were, and whether I was acquainted with them, but they generally came in together, ſeldom leſs than two, and always kept ſo ſtrict an eye upon me, I found it impoſſible to put my ſcheme into execution; and as I reflected, ſuch an attempt would moſt likely only increaſe the rigour of my confinement, I gave up all thoughts of it.

I led

I led this uncomfortable life for about ſix weeks, which appeared to me as many centuries, notwithſtanding the precaution of thoſe who had placed me there, to furniſh my apartment with plenty of books of every kind to amuſe me; but my mind was not ſufficiently compoſed to allow me to enjoy any thing. Had I known why I was thus confined, or where I was, I ſhould have been comparatively happy, and might have formed ſome idea of when my impriſonment would ceaſe.

At laſt, one day after dinner, when I leaſt expected it, one of the maſks who waited upon me, came towards me with a handkerchief in his hand; he deſired me to ſit down, in a feigned voice, as they always addreſſed me; as it was now become a matter of indifference to me what they did with me, I made no anſwer, but ſet down as he deſired, and he tied this handkerchief over my eyes, in the ſame manner they had done when they conveyed me thither; he alſo tied my hands, deſiring

deſiring me not to be alarmed, as the moment approached that would ſet me at liberty.

"Whether you are ſincere in your promiſes or not," ſays I, "I cannot defend myſelf, and even death is preferable to the life I have led here, ſo do juſt whatever you chuſe with me, I freely forgive you."

I was now led down ſome ſteps, and put into a coach, my two jailors ſtill my companions; we then ſet off pretty briſkly, and after about as long a ride as when I arrived at my priſon, the carriage ſtopped; they made me get out, and ſeated me upon the ground, at the foot of a tree, and I heard the carriage drive off. I was kept in this kind of ſuſpence for a quarter of an hour, or more, they then untied my hands, and tied my feet very faſt, that is, with many knots, as hard as they could tighten them, and without either ſpeaking, or removing the handkerchief from my eyes, they all ſet off. Exceſſively puzzled

to

to think what was going forward, I ſat very quiet; they had aſſured me I was not in any danger, or I ſhould have ſuppoſed they were going to throw me into ſome river. But not hearing any one near me, after an interval of ſome minutes had elapſed, and finding my hands at liberty, I untied the handkerchief that covered my eyes, and upon looking round me, I perceived, at a conſiderable diſtance, the four men mounting four horſes that were in waiting for them they ſet off as hard as they could gallop, the moment I caught ſight of them. I was too happy to think of purſuing them, had I had it in my power, but began to endeavour to ſet my legs at liberty, which took me half an hour, or more, untying, and they had taken care I ſhould have no ſpeedier method.

Perceiving I was in a wood, I began to wonder what part of France I was in, when upon taking a ſecond ſurvey of the ſurrounding objects, I was ſoon convinced, to my no ſmall ſurpriſe, I was upon the very ſpot in the Foreſt

Foreſt of Chatelherault, where I had firſt met the worthy party who had juſt taken their leave of me.

I now determined to proceed on foot to the firſt village, where I thought I would take horſes on to Paris, but I had not advanced more than ten ſteps towards the high road, before I perceived a horſe ſtanding, tied to a tree: he was evidently intended for me, I therefore approached him, and found my own piſtols in the holſters of the ſaddle, and a pair of boots hanging acroſs it, in one of which I found a note, pinned juſt within the top, which informed me my chaiſe was at the poſt-houſe at Chatelherault, waiting my arrival; I therefore rode there as faſt as I could. I cannot ſay my horſe was a very ſwift one, but I preſumed thoſe that had provided him for me, had their reaſons for that. I left him with the poſt-maſter where my carriage was, ſaying, "ſome body would come for him;" I then aſked the man, "who had brought my chaiſe?" he deſcribed

the perſon to me, but I was not any nearer, as I did not recollect ever having ſeen a perſon anſwering his deſcription, ſo I ſet off as faſt as poſſible, once more, for Paris, though I hardly thought myſelf ſafe 'till I had entered the city.

You will eaſily judge, that being alone, and in the evening, I firſt drove to my own private houſe, of which I had the key in my pocket, for when I was ſtopped, they only took my knife from me, and I had always carried this key about me ſince I was married, for good reaſons.

I had the door of the chaiſe open, before the poſtillions could hardly ſtop, and having my money ready to pay them, I ordered them to leave the chaiſe in the court, and to ſet off immediately. The moment they were without the gates, I flew to the houſe door, and without waiting for a light, I went down into the cellar; it was not more than eight o'clock, therefore I thought my wife would not

not be in bed, though I was convinced ſhe muſt have lain in. I fumbled out the bell, which always announced my arrival, but received no anſwer; I rang a ſecond time with more violence, and in the manner it was placed, and from the ſize of it, I was convinced it muſt have awoke Elizabeth, had ſhe been aſleep. Still the ſame ſilence prevailed; I went up ſtairs again into my own apartment, and found ſome phoſphorus matches that I always had laid ready, by which means I ſoon procured a light, for I found every thing there as I had left it, and taking a hatchet, I returned once more into the cellar, to break my way through. I ſoon began my operation, frightened the whole time at the noiſe I made, convinced, if any body was in the houſe, they would have heard me. Had the door been made of iron, I believe the anxiety I was in juſt then, would have given me ſtrength to have forced my way through it.

Having ſucceeded, I inſtantly ran up ſtairs into my wife's bed-room, when behold I diſcovered the houſe was perfectly empty; there was not a ſingle piece of furniture remaining. Though from various reflections during my confinement, I had ſome reaſon to expect this confirmation of my misfortune, I looked round me aghaſt, and remained motionleſs; I cannot deſcribe my feelings, I only wonder, in the agitation of mind I was in, I did not commit ſome act of violence; I was breathleſs with horror, and every joint of me trembled; but hope, which never abandons unfortunate people, came to my aſſiſtance, and ſaved me from deſpair. I perſuaded myſelf that ſome reaſons, my impriſonment had occaſioned my ignorance of, had obliged my wife to change her lodgings; and though my fears almoſt got the better of my hopes, ſtill this idea conſoled me; but then how came the houſe to be unfurniſhed, there muſt be ſomething very ſtrange at the bottom, at all events.

I went

I went out the ſame way I entered, and going out into the ſtreet de * * *, I began to knock at the door of the great houſe, too certain, you muſt ſuppoſe, it would not be opened for me; but I thought this manœuvre would afford me an opportunity of making inquiries among the neighbours. I knocked ſeveral times before any body took notice, though I perceived lights in all the windows oppoſite; at laſt a Cabinet-Maker, who lived almoſt facing the door, came up to me, and informed me the houſe was empty. I was pretty ſure he did not know me, by the familiarity with which he addreſſed me, ſo I aſked him how long it had been ſo, and whom it belonged to, adding, I was confident it was the houſe I had been directed to.

"The proprietor is a ſingle gentleman, my friend, who has no occaſion for it, ſo he always lets it ready furniſhed, as he generally reſides with his father, the Preſident de Ranſai."

"But who lived in it laſt?" ſays I, "and how long has it been empty?"

"About ſix weeks, and the laſt inhabitant was a young lady."

"Or ſome miſtreſs of the young gentleman's, I ſuppoſe," ſays I, wiſhing to diſcover all he knew reſpecting this ſtrange affair.

"No, he did not believe ſhe was, he fancied it was ſome young widow, by the retired manner in which ſhe had lived, for hardly any body viſited her, nor did ſhe ever go out much; he had never ſeen any body go in and out but a young girl, who uſed to go to the market, ſeemingly; but the laſt time he ſaw the lady, was, as he had already told me, about ſix weeks before, when ſhe came out muffled up very early one morning, with the young girl he had often remarked, who returned alone about two hours afterwards."

I aſked

I aſked him what ſort of a perſon this girl was, and his deſcription left me no doubt of its being Elizabeth.

" A perſon went into the houſe with her," he added, " whom he took to be a broker, therefore he preſumed the lady had purchaſed the furniture when ſhe took the houſe, as it was very ſoon all removed."

" But did not any of the gentleman's ſervants, to whom the houſe belonged, aſſiſt."

" No, he only ſaw the porters, the broker, and the young girl, who ſtaid 'till all the furniture was removed, and then followed it, after having locked the door. I was a witof the whole tranſaction, for as my ſhop juſt faces the door, I could not avoid ſeeing all that was going forward."

This ſtrange account, by no means diminiſhed my uneaſineſs, I was once more half diſtracted, without knowing what ſteps to

take. However, as it grew very late, I determined to go to my father's, convinced, in my own mind, he had been at the bottom of every thing, but thought I ſhould diſcover whether I was right in my conjectures by his diſcourſe, and came to a reſolution of declaring my marriage, if I found he had any ſuſpicion of it, determined to incur his everlaſting diſpleaſure, rather than not find out where my wife and child were, certain ſhe had not willingly abandoned me, and convinced ſhe had not been reduced to the neceſſity of ſelling the furniture.

I therefore ſuppoſed my father muſt have found out my marriage, and had told her ſome ſtory, had reduced her to retire to ſome private retreat he had moſt likely prepared for her: or ſhe might, very poſſibly, be gone to England, in a fit of deſpair; but then, how ſhall I be able to come to the bottom of all this, for I was pretty ſure my father had taken his meaſures too prudently to be eaſily diſcovered,

diſcovered, if he did not chuſe to acknowledge the truth himſelf.

I therefore arrived at his hotel in a ſtate of mind I could hardly wiſh my greateſt enemy to experience; I knew my late confinement, and the ſevere diſappointment I had met with upon my arrival, had altered me very much, and was therefore in hopes, pity might induce my father to ſet my mind at eaſe, if it was in his power. The porter looked amazed when he let me in, and informed me my father was at home.

He was alone when I entered, and preparing to retire for the night. I thought he did not ſeem ſo ſurpriſed as I naturally expected he would at my arrival, conſidering I had been miſſing ſo long; haſty as moſt people are to condemn, when once they begin to ſuſpect any body, I immediately concluded my late impriſonment was no ſecret to him; I endeavoured to appear compoſed, though I was torn by ten thouſand conflicting

paſſions. He wiſhed to make me believe the ſight of me aſtoniſhed him, but did not ſucceed.

He inſtantly aſked me "what had occaſioned my long, and to him, unexpected abſence; why I had not wrote."

I briefly recapitulated what had really happened to me upon the road, watching his countenance during my recital.

When I had concluded, he burſt into a violent fit of laughter, ſaying, "he gave me great credit for my excellent ſtory, but he ſhould much ſooner have believed me, if I had told him it was ſome fair lady in Portou had thus detained me, which he verily believed to have been the caſe."

His behaviour really puzzled me; if he fancied ſome amorous intrigue had occaſioned my ſtrange abſence, I muſt be wrong in my firſt conjectures, and there was nothing remarkable

remarkable in his reception of me; and in fact, if he was really ignorant of my ſtrange detention, to what elſe but a love affair could he attribute my long ſtay in the country; I kept looking at him very earneſtly, to diſcover his real ſentiments, if poſſible, to no purpoſe. He behaved ſo ſtrangely, and rallied me ſo much, about this unknown fair one, I did not know what to think, therefore, after giving him a very ſummary account of the buſineſs I had been ſent upon, I complained of fatigue, and retired.

One of my father's valets came to offer me his ſervices, upon inquiring for my own, whom they had not ſeen ſince I left Paris. I endeavoured to diſcover, through this fellow, what I ſo much wanted to know. I was obliged to aſk very vague queſtions, and received very unſatisfactory anſwers; indeed he ſeemed totally ignorant of every thing I alluded to.

I was now convinced, if my father had any hand in the buſineſs, his ſervants were not in his confidence. I particularly aſked if they had none of them ſeen my valet; he had not, he aſſured me, ſome of my ſervants might, but he did not think they had, as he had heard my footmen wondering, that very day, what was become of both me and him. I did not tell him where we parted, but I was pretty ſure now he had not returned to Paris.

"And has not his wife been to inquire for him."

The fellow ſmiled while he ſaid, "not that I know of, ſir."

I therefore eaſily gueſſed Monſieur Jaſmin was a more faſhionable man than his maſter. He had rode off, as I obſerved, the moment I was ſurrounded, and none of my maſked friends had endeavoured to detain him, or

even offered to purſue him; I then thought he had certainly made the beſt of his way to Paris, to inform my father of what had happened, but I now began to imagine, ſuppoſing I ſhould certainly be murdered, and fearful his ſtory would not be credited, and might bring him into trouble, he had ſought a retreat in Gaſcony, where he was born, dreading, leſt he ſhould be accuſed of having a hand in the aſſaſſination.

I therefore went to bed more perplexed than ever. My father made me repeat my ſtory in the morning, and appeared then to believe it, ſaying,

" I had moſt likely been taken for ſomebody elſe, but as my detention moſt probably proceeded from an error of the Prime Miniſters, or of thoſe he had delegated to execute his orders, it would be of no uſe attempting to diſcover the real cauſe of it, or to make any buſtle about it. He had begun

begun to be very uneaſy about me, though he muſt fly, he thought it was ſome intrigue detained me ſo long in Portou."

What was I now to think? my whole time was ſpent in forming conjectures and plans to recover my loſt treaſures. Every day I viſited the different places I thought it likely my wife might be confined in, and all the Engliſh convents in Paris, and the environs, thinking ſhe might have retired into one of thoſe of her own accord, finding ſhe neither ſaw nor heard from me, but all to no purpoſe.

I went on in this manner for a month, ſpending my days in ſearching, for what I ſpent my nights in lamenting the loſs of; going each day, after dark, to my private houſe in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, lighting candles and ſetting near the windows, or leaning out of them for hours together.

At

At the end of a month, finding all my endeavours uſeleſs, I reſolved to mention the matter to my father, convinced I ſhould never diſcover my wife, without his aſſiſtance; for had ſhe left her apartments of her own accord, ſhe muſt have found out I was returned, and I was certain ſhe would either have wrote to me, or have ſent me word where ſhe was. I therefore preſumed ſhe was ſhut up by ſome ſuperior power, where it was impoſſible for her to do either.

As my father had only made a joke of the love affair he was pleaſed to ſuſpect had occaſioned my confinement, for he often hinted, he thought it originated with ſome jealous rival I had ſuperceded in the good graces of ſome pretty woman; I therefore thought I might mention a miſtreſs to him, without offending him, not chuſing, if I could poſſibly avoid it, to make him acquainted with my marriage, which I ſtill flattered myſelf, he was ignorant of.

He very ſoon afforded me an opportunity, for one morning, having entered his ſtudy earlier than uſual, he looked at me with a ſmile, ſaying,

"To what am I to attribute this early viſit? you don't ſeem in ſpirits, Count, I am afraid you are ſtill pining after this fair lady you left in Portou; what will not any of our handſome Pariſian ladies undertake to conſole you?"

I aſſured him my melancholy did not proceed from any regret I felt at having quitted Portou, but that during my abſence I had loſt a woman I adored, and whom I had left at Paris, but upon my return, I found ſhe had left the houſe where ſhe reſided, and I had not been able to gain any intelligence concerning her, therefore, I entreated he would help me to diſcover her retreat."

He

He looked at me very ſeriouſly during my ſpeech, but when I had concluded, he laughed very heartily, ſaying,

"I really offered him a very honourable employment, but to oblige me, he would, for once, be my Mercury, promiſing to queſtion all the different Commiſſaries, and to entreat permiſſion of the Lieutenant of the Police to cauſe a review to be made of all the ladies of eaſy virtue in Paris, and he had no doubt but I ſhould diſcover my nymph by theſe means, for he would be particularly inquiſitive concerning thoſe who had been ſent to the Salpetriere, or Brietre, during my abſence."

This kind of raillery hurt me very much, and I aſſured him, the lady I wiſhed to diſcover was not one of thoſe miſerable beings he alluded to.

"Oh

" Oh I don't pretend to diſpute the ladies immaculate virtue, Count, her living with you as a miſtreſs, is a convincing proof to me of her chaſtity."

My patience had like to have eſcaped me, I was juſt going to tell him whom he was thus abuſing, when I checked myſelf, and ſaid, " you are quite miſtaken in your notions, ſir."

" Well, I may wrong the lady's reputation," ſays he, " but you will allow, Count, you are as liable to have been deceived by this virtuous lady, as I am to miſinterpret her virtuous actions; now after all, how could you expect this modern Lucretia poſſeſſed the patience of Job: you never wrote to her, I preſume, during your confinement, and her ſtock of patience, as well as caſh, might be exhauſted; beſides, there are ſuch things as rent days, and her landlord might not chuſe to truſt her; ſo I preſume the veſtal prudently

dently decamped ſome night, and has very likely forgot to leave the keys of her apartment behind her; but I ſuppoſe you have forced the locks, ſince you are certain this turtle dove has forſaken its neſt."

After ſeveral more ironical ſpeeches, that went to my heart, he promiſed me very ſeriouſly, that he would exert his utmoſt power to diſcover my dulcenia for me, though he never aſked me her name, or any deſcription of her, nor did I inform him of either.

Finding, from his converſation, I ſhould never recover her through his means, I again renewed my ſearches, but ſtill without ſucceſs, and having paſſed ſix months in this fruitleſs occupation, I took averſion to Paris, and determined to travel in ſearch of my wife, as I was indiſpoſed both in body and mind.

My father readily conſented, nay, approved of my intention, and adviſed me to make the tour

tour of Italy. I neither explained to him the real motive of my travels, nor promiſed to obey his injunctions, or more properly, his advice; he only deſired I would let him hear from me very often.

I ſat of, deſpairing almoſt of ever recovering my loſt jewel, but inſtead of croſſing the Alps, as my father wiſhed, and expected I meant to do, I determined to croſs the Pas de Calais, and make the tour of England. I ſpoke the language very fluently, and thought, if my wife had left me of her own accord, finding ſhe did not hear from me, thinking herſelf abandoned, perhaps, and apprehenſive of my father's vengeance, her own country was the moſt likely aſylum for her to pitch upon, where ſhe would be among her mother's relations, whom I had often heard her mention, and whom, I believe, were ignorant of the extreme poverty her mother expired in; and I thought Elizabeth had certainly adviſed her to purſue this ſcheme, if ſhe had been conſulted,

conſulted, as ſhe deteſted France, and was by no means partial to the confined life they led in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine; all theſe things conſidered, and convinced in my own mind I muſt have found her had ſhe been in France.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

THE Preſident continued; I immediately ſet of, and as ſoon as I arrived at Calais, embarked for Dover, from whence I proceeded, as ſoon as poſſible, to London.

I knew the name of a great uncle of my wife's, and his reſidence in town; indeed, I believe he always reſided in London, for none of the family were rich. This gentleman was a Baronet, a Sir Charles Wyndham, and

it

it was with him and his lady Madame D'Orville and her daughter had reſided, after the Chevalier D'Orville's death, 'till they came over to Paris to claim the Marquis D'Orville's eſtates.

I deſired to be drove any where, ſo I could but get a lodging, and as ſoon as I had made myſelf rather decent, I proceeded to this gentleman's houſe; he was at home, and I was inſtantly admitted into the dining room; he was alone, and upon hearing my name announced, he actually ſtarted, and addreſſing me with an exceſſive haughty air, deſired to know my buſineſs, and without allowing me time to anſwer him, went on, ſaying,

"He was amazed at my aſſurance, after having diſhonoured, nay, occaſioned his niece's death, in daring to ſet my foot within his doors."

I was not prepared for ſuch a reception, and was really thunderſtruck at receiving ſuch unmerited

unmerited reproaches; but the word death ſtruck ſuch a dagger to my ſoul, I could hardly ſupport myſelf; my knees trembled, and my eye-ſight forſook me; I caught hold of the back of a chair, and after a ſhort interval, having rather recovered myſelf, ſaid,

"Heavens! ſir! can what you ſay be true? is my wife really dead? ſurely it cannot be; do not condemn to utter deſpair, a man whoſe exiſtence almoſt depended upon her's. did ſhe die in London? oh recall thoſe cruel words; even my anxious doubts and fears were preferable to this horrid certainty, of having loſt her for ever."

The Baronet ſeemed affected and ſurpriſed by the emotions I betrayed, which he was convinced were not affected. He looked at me for a few minutes, and then ſaid,

"She died, I underſtood, at Paris, ſir, and it appears very ſtrange to me, I ſhould give

give you the firſt intelligence of ſuch an event."

"Very poſſibly, Sir Charles, but do not accuſe me before you have heard my ſtory; how did you learn her death?"

"From her maid Elizabeth, who accompanied her and her mother to Paris, and who returned to England ſoon after ſhe buried her miſtreſs."

"And is Elizabeth now in England, Sir Charles?" ſaid I, very impatiently, without allowing him to finiſh his phraſe, or paying any attention to the coolneſs that was ſtill predominant in his manners."

"She is," anſwered he, very drily.

"Then let me entreat, as the greateſt favour you can confer upon me, Sir Charles, you would ſend for her this moment; ſhe will clear every thing to me: ſhe loved her

miſtreſs, and I ſhall, at leaſt, have the conſolation of diſcovering, through her means, what became of my child, if I am doomed to ſurvive the loſs of my wife."

"This Elizabeth, whom you are ſo deſirous to ſee, ſir," ſays the Baronet, "told Lady Wyndham and me, your inconſtancy and ill uſage broke my niece's heart; you are the beſt judge."

"I do not think I deſerve theſe reproaches, Sir Charles, my attachment for my wife alone, brought me to England in ſearch of her, after having, in vain, ſtirred heaven and earth to diſcover her in Paris, and I was in hopes you might be informed of her retreat, knowing ſhe ſometimes correſponded with you."

My ſpeeches were ſo candid, they ſoon diſſipated the gloom upon the Baronet's countenance. He begged I would be ſeated; I did as he deſired, entreating him to inform me,

me, what I had to hope or fear, as I was a total ſtranger to ever thing which had paſſed reſpecting my wife, during the laſt nine months.

The Baronet's ſurpriſe ſeemed greatly increaſed, and he ſaid,

"As I before informed you, ſir, Elizabeth arrived in London about eight months ago; ſhe waited upon my wife very ſoon after her return, to whom ſhe imparted the death of our niece, aſſerting, you were the occaſion of it."

"Pray let me entreat, Sir Charles, you would favour me with the particulars of her narration; I am prepared to hear any thing now; let her have made me out ever ſo guilty in your eyes, I am confident I can refute all her accuſations."

"This girl, ſir, told Lady Wyndham, you had firſt of all ſeduced Mademoiſelle D'Orville,

ville, under the ſtale pretence of a falſe marriage, at leaſt you knew ſhe could not prove its validity, as it had been contracted without your father's conſent, elſe ſhe agreed you were married by a prieſt; that after this you had kept her for ſome months very privately, 'till you grew tired of her, when you totally abandoned her, and even left Paris, to avoid any ſearch ſhe might make after you, leaving her very big with child, and without means to provide either for herſelf, or her offspring, and no hopes of obtaining any thing from you, had ſhe applied for legal redreſs: in ſhort, I cannot enumerate half the inhuman actions you ſtand accuſed of."

From this account I was convinced my wife was alive, if this miſerable wretch had not murdered her, either before or after ſhe had robbed her, for every circumſtance I had learnt from the Cabinet Maker, ruſhed into my mind, and I own I was very happy to think I was at laſt in a fair way of coming at the bottom of this iniquitous buſineſs, certain now,

now, it was by this wicked wretches advice, my wife had abandoned the aſylum I had provided for her.

I ſoon removed all Sir Charles's prejudices againſt me, by telling him our whole ſtory, which I took up from my firſt acquaintance with the lovely Eugenia, and by ſhewing him ſeveral of the laſt letters I had received from her, during my ſtay in Portou, which I always carried about me, as they were my only conſolation.

He begged my pardon ten thouſand times, for the rude reception he had given me, adding,

" He hoped I would attribute it to the real cauſe, his having been ſufficiently credulous to believe the falſe reports it had pleaſed Elizabeth to propogate concerning me."

I told him I thought my wife was ſtill alive, if this horrid creature, to conceal her other crimes, had not murdered her, as I had ſearched all the pariſh regiſters at Paris, to diſcover whether my child had been chriſtened in any of the churches, I muſt therefore have known if my wife had been buried in any of them.

Sir Charles ſaid, "he thought there was great reaſon to hope his niece ſtill lived, but we muſt not be too ſanguine in our expectations; ſhe might have died in child-bed; but at all events, we would ſoon have the matter cleared up, entreating my permiſſion to retire for a few minutes. He ſoon returned with Lady Wyndham, to whom he had imparted the heads of my ſtory, and my wiſh to ſee Elizabeth as ſoon as poſſible.

Her Ladyſhip paid me her compliments with the utmoſt politeneſs, ſaying,

"She

"She would ſend for the vile wretch immediately," that "ſhe had married a young Frenchman ſince her arrival in London."

"They keep a Hair-dreſſers and Perfumers ſhop I think you told me, my dear?"

"Yes, in the next ſtreet," replied her Ladyſhip.

"Then pray, Madam, let me entreat they may both be ſent for; the huſband may know as much as the wife, if he was one of her Paris acquaintances."

"Oh, I fancy he was," replied Lady Wyndham, "but as he often dreſſes my hair, I will ſend for him under that pretence, and deſire his wife would accompany him; ſhe is a moſt excellent needle-woman, and has got ſome work of mine in hand, therefore ſhe will merely think I want to queſtion her concerning that."

A ſervant was inſtantly diſpatched for them both, with particular orders not to mention my being at Sir Charles's.

"We had better walk into my dreſſing-room," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "there is a cloſet in which, with the Count's permiſſion, I will place him, that he may hear the wicked creature's ſtory, which I will introduce, as by accident, and make her repeat what ſhe has told me, before ſhe ſees him."

I inſtantly agreed to this propoſition, thinking it a very good one, becauſe when ſhe knew I had over-heard her, ſhe would not be ſo likely to prevaricate, as were ſhe to ſee me, when ſhe firſt came in.

We all three walked into the dreſſing-room, and as ſoon as they arrived, I went into the cloſet, leaving the door ſufficiently upon the jar, that I might not loſe a ſyllable of this intereſting converſation.

Sir

Sir Charles had ſeated himſelf at one of the windows, with a book: the wretches were introduced; Lady Wyndham firſt began to queſtion Elizabeth about the work already mentioned; then changed the diſcourſe to the Pariſian faſhions. She next aſked the huſband how he liked London, hoped they found their buſineſs anſwer; but without giving him time to reply, ſhe aſked Elizabeth how ſhe had dare venture to marry a Frenchman, diſliking their country as ſhe did, and knowing what her miſtreſs had ſuffered through a gentleman of the ſame nation.

Oh, there are no rules without exceptions, my Lady," ſays Elizabeth, "and I am ſure I ought not to find fault with Frenchmen, or their country, now, for I have met with an excellent huſband; I only wiſh my poor dear miſtreſs had been as fortunate; but I cannot think of that good for nothing Count de St. Blancard, with common patience."

" Nor I either," ſays Lady Wyndham, " but tell me, I have time to liſten to you now, as I hardly ever could keep my temper ſufficiently to hear you out, when we have talked of her misfortunes; do give me the particulars of her unfortunate death; Sir Charles is curious to hear the whole ſtory, as well as myſelf, as we are quite unengaged; ſit down both of you; I had intended going out, but I have changed my mind, ſo my hair will do."

They obeyed, and Elizabeth began her ſtory from her miſtreſs's arrival at Paris; accuſed my father of having occaſioned the loſs of their law-ſuit; he was not much better than his ſon, ſhe ſaid; but her Ladyſhip cut off this part of her ſtory, deſiring ſhe would take up her narrative from Madame D'Orville's death, as neither herſelf, nor Sir Charles, had ever entertained any hopes ſhe would gain the ſuit which carried her to Paris. The Preſident De Ranſal could not act contrary to the law, therefore he was not

to

to be blamed. Madame D'Orville had wrote them word he had done all in his power to ſerve them, therefore, I don't think his ſon takes after him; but I am only interrupting you, proceed with your ſtory; ſhe then continued, and told much the ſame ſtory I had learnt before from the Baronet, laying me out in the darkeſt colours; no devil could be worſe than I was, according to her account; ſhe concluded by ſaying, her miſtreſs died of a broken heart, dreading every moment I ſhould have obtained a letter de cachet to have her ſhut up for life, which ſhe did not doubt I ſhould have done, if death had not deprived me of my victim.

" But I thought the Count abandoned your miſtreſs before ſhe laid in," ſaid Lady Wyndham.

" So he did, my lady, and left her quite deſtitute, without ſo much as a Louis d'or to bleſs herſelf with; I was obliged to ſell all the cloaths ſhe had, almoſt, to keep us from

ſtarving, ſo that at laſt, when ſhe died, I could barely raiſe money enough to bury her, and I am ſure I ſhould have loſt all my wages, if your ladyſhip had not been ſo kind as to ſatisfy me; but poor dear ſoul, I was ſo fond of her, I am ſure I never would have quitted her, had ſhe lived, though I had been obliged to beg my bread with her."

Here the vile hypocrite pretended to weep. I had been near burſting out of the cloſet ſeveral times during her recital, but I could not contain my fury any longer, I therefore flew out, and ſeizing hold of her, ſaid,

"Wretch that you are, now what have you to ſay for yourſelf; but before you retract all the abominable lies you have been telling, inform me inſtantly what is become of my wife."

I believe I graſped her ſo tight, ſhe could not ſpeak, through pain, as her eyes rolled, and

and ſhe only ſcreamed out, and ſeemed terrified at the ſight of me, whom ſhe ſo little expected; nay, I really believe ſhe would have fallen off her chair, if I had not held her upon it. I hardly know whoſe fright was the greateſt, her's or her huſband's, whom I now turned round to look at, as I had not recognized his voice, from his having a cold, during the few words he uttered upon his entrance into the room, but my ſurpriſe was not much ſuperior to his, upon diſcovering this was the very man that had accompanied me into Portou, and had abandoned me in the Foreſt of Chatelherault, in a word, my late valet.

The Baronet, who perceived the alarm he was in, now roſe, and locked the door, to prevent his making his eſcape; and I, letting go his wife, and advancing towards him, ſeized him by the collar, and led him to a chair near his wife, in which I ſeated him.

" Now,

" Now, wretches, you are both detected, and your lives are, perhaps, in my power, therefore, as you hope or expect to meet with mercy, inform me inſtantly what you have done with my wife: I ſuppoſe you have murdered her, however, my great conſolation is, you will both be hanged for the horrid crime, for I have no doubt but one is as guilty as the other."

Finding they had no chance of eſcaping, and frightened at my accuſation, trembling and looking at each other, they flung themſelves upon their knees before me, begging for mercy, and aſſuring me they were not guilty of the crime I accuſed them of.

" Do not expect to meet with any lenity," ſays I, " if you do not inſtantly confeſs the truth."

" Oh pray forgive us, ſir," was the cry of both for ſome time, " and we will tell you all we know, and indeed, your honour, we

we never hurt a hair of your good lady's head."

"Then I promiſe to forgive you," feeling all my hopes revive; "ſay ſhe is not dead, and I will let you riſe."

"Indeed ſir," was repeated over and over by both, "ſhe is alive for any thing we know to the contrary."

My anger was greatly abated by this intelligence, and I began to blame myſelf for having given way to paſſion ſo much before Sir Charles and his lady. I therefore allowed them to get up, and made them ſit down before me.

The Baronet and his lady entreated I would alſo take a chair, but I begged to be excuſed, and remained ſtanding fronting theſe people, ready to devour every word before they uttered it.

"Now

" Now tell me where my wife is at this time, before you go any farther; I ſhall hear what elſe you have to ſay afterwards."

" Indeed ſir we don't know," ſays Elizabeth, who was the moſt recovered of the two, " the Preſident took her away, and we don't know where he put her."

" Take care, for by heavens your evaſive anſwers won't ſatisfy me, therefore inform me how ſhe came into his hands? it could only be through your treachery, Elizabeth."

They now began their ſtory at the ſame time, but I ſtopped them, ſaying,

" I did not doubt but they wiſhed to clear themſelves, but deſired they would ſpeak in turns, ordering my quondam valet to begin, aſſuring him he ſhould not eſcape, 'till I was thoroughly ſatisfied."

He

He began, proteſting he would ſooner be hanged than tell me a ſingle falſity.

"Go on," ſays I, which he did in theſe words, as near as I can recollect.

"You muſt remember, ſir, that whenever you ſlept at your private houſe in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, you always allowed me to go home, before you went to bed, (thinking I was married, which was not the caſe) ordering me to be with you at ſuch a time the next morning. For ſome time, ſir, I did not think there was any thing extraordinary in your proceedings, but latterly you uſed to order me to come later of a morning, and ſeldom or ever admitted me into your bedchamber, as uſual, except juſt to put it to rights, and I never found the bed much deranged, as if it had been ſlept in, this cauſed my firſt ſuſpicions."

"What were they?" interrupting him.

"That

" That you uſed to go out to viſit ſome miſtreſs, ſir, after I had left you, and ſo I did all in my power to find out whether I was right in my conjectures, and when you uſed to ſend me home, I always banged the ſtreet door after me, with a violent noiſe, but having a maſter key, I uſually returned in about an hour, very ſoftly, to watch whether you left the houſe; ſometimes I uſed to liſten at your bed room door; ſtill I was not the nearer, for I never heard you move about, nor did I ever ſee any light; I have often tried to open the door, but always found it locked, ſo at laſt, ſir, I thought you were turned Alchymiſt, and was trying to make gold, though God knows you did not want it. Well, I was more and more bent upon finding out what you really did after you ſent me home, from this fooliſh conjecture; ſo one night, after having been ſent away as uſual, with orders not to return 'till very late the next morning, I thought to be ſure ſomething was going forward, particularly juſt then; however, I went away as uſual, and returned

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in leſs than half an hour, but did not go into the houſe, reſolved to watch under your windows which looked into the garden; as I approached them very ſoftly, (for it was a very fine moon-light night) I perceived the one in your dreſſing-room, which communicated with your bed-chamber, was open, yet I could not diſcern any light in any part of the houſe, ſo I went and got a ladder, which ſtood againſt the garden wall, (the gardener having been pruning the trees a few days before) and placed it againſt this window, by which means I got in; I looked round me by the light of the moon, and ſaw the door which went into the bed-room, was open, ſo I ventured in, and ſaw the bed curtains undrawn, and no one in it. This diſcovery inflamed my curioſity more than ever, I was convinced now you went out of nights, and by the window, moſt probably, I thought, though I could not gueſs why you took that uſeleſs precaution, ſir. However, I got out as I had got in, carried the ladder back to its place, and came very ſoftly round to the front door, let myſelf in

in as uſual, then went into your ſtudy and parlour, but ſtill could not find you; at laſt I perceived a glimmering light, as I ſtood in the paſſage, proceeded from the cellar, I thought, ſo I inſtantly gueſſed you were there, and wondered what you could be about. I advanced to the top of the ſtairs, and liſtened for ſome time, without hearing any noiſe; I then laid myſelf down to look, but could not diſtinguiſh any thing, ſo at laſt I ventured down the ſteps, liſtening upon every one; ſtill I neither heard nor ſaw any thing but a lamp, which hung ſuſpended from the roof, and which gave the light I had firſt perceived. I now went fairly down, when in looking round, I perceived the door, which I had always ſuppoſed was faſtened up, open, I therefore eaſily gueſſed that you went into the next houſe of a night, by this way; I dared not follow you, but I was certain I muſt be right this time, ſo I returned the ſame way I came, exceedingly well ſatisfied, and convinced that you kept a miſtreſs in your largeſt houſe. I went out with my accuſtomed precaution,

precaution, and returned at the appointed time in the morning; you let me into your apartment as uſual, ſir, and my only wiſh now was, to diſcover who inhabited the great houſe, therefore, as ſoon as I had finiſhed dreſſing you, and put every thing to rights, I went to a publick houſe near, and from the windows of which I could diſcern every ſoul who came out of the other houſe. After ſitting there ſome time, a woman came out, and having locked the door after her, walked up the ſtreet; I inſtantly ſet off after her, and walking on pretty quick, I pretended to meet her cloſe to the Baſtile, and was aſtoniſhed when I found it was Elizabeth, whom I had often ſeen at Madame D'Orville's, when you uſed to viſit there, ſir, before their law-ſuit was decided, and having been rather familiar with her then, I aſked her how ſhe did, and kept walking on with her, aſking her after her miſtreſſes, and ſo on. She hardly knew what anſwers to make, which ſoon convinced me I had hit upon the right nail, ſo I laughed at her for being ſo embarraſſed, ſaying,

ſhe

ſhe need not be afraid of talking to me now, any more than ſhe was formerly, for I was up to every thing; ſhe kept her miſtreſs's ſecrets, and I did the ſame for my maſter."

" She did not know what I meant," ſhe ſaid.

" Why do you think I don't know that my maſter viſits your young miſtreſs; now, why ſhould not you and I be as familiar as they are?"

" I tell you what," ſays ſhe, " you don't know what you are talking about, I don't live with Madame D'Orville now, ſhe is dead, ſo don't think to pump me."

" Now how can you be ſo fooliſh," ſays I, " now come, did not my maſter, the Count de St. Blancard, viſit your miſtreſs at half paſt ten laſt night, and did not he go through the door in the cellar, he has had opened on purpoſe, that people may not find out where his

his miſtreſs lives: beſides, I know the old woman is dead, but that you ſtill live with her daughter."

"To be ſure," ſays ſhe, "you muſt be a witch; why where do you remain while your maſter comes to our houſe?"

"In his bed room," ſays I, "and if you have not any objection, I will come and keep you company while my maſter is with your miſtreſs; I can follow his footſteps."

"Indeed, I ſhall not agree to any ſuch thing; I would not have you found with me for the world."

"Why what harm would there be in my coming to ſee you, any more than there is in my maſter going to ſee your miſtreſs."

"Why they are married, you know, ſo that makes ſome difference, I think."



"Well,

" Well, but we may be married too, ſometime or other; but let us take a little time for our courtſhip firſt, though we might eaſily be as much married as they are."

" How?" ſays ſhe, " was not I preſent? and was not they married at St. Roch, by Madame D'Orville's Confeſſor; I would have you to know, I would not live with any man's kept miſtreſs."

" In ſhort, ſir, for we had turned into the gardens of the arſenal, ſhe told me the whole ſtory of your marriage, the precautions ſhe had taken, &c. &c. and that her miſtreſs was very far gone with child. At laſt we thought of parting, I then told her that I really was not in any of your ſecrets, 'till ſhe had diſcloſed them to me, as all that I had ſaid before, was hap-hazard, to make her ſatisfy my curioſity; ſhe abuſed me very much, ſaying,"

" I had

"I had taken her in, and threatened to tell you all that had paſſed between us the next time ſhe ſaw you."

"I told her, if ſhe did not promiſe me that inſtant, never to open her lips to you upon the ſubject, I would go and tell the Preſident immediately, all I had learnt from her, ſo ſhe burſt into tears, and entreated I would not be the ruin of her. I promiſed I would not, upon condition ſhe would admit me, whenever you was with her miſtreſs. She agreed, and we ſwore to keep each other's ſecrets, and ſhe ſaid ſhe would make a ſignal from one of the windows, to let me know when I could come in with ſafety through the cellar, as ſhe dare not open the houſe door at that time of night, and told me the way to her room, which her miſtreſs never entered when you was there, ſir.

We now ſaw one another as often as you viſited your lady, and we never intended to have divulged the ſecret, I can aſſure you,

but unfortunately one day I got drunk with La Fleur, your father's head valet, and in talking over the family affairs, I was imprudent enough to entruſt him with the ſecret of your marriage, ſaying, I was in love with your lady's maid. He would not believe me for ever ſo long, ſo at laſt I ſhewed him a ring Elizabeth had given me, by way of convincing him of the truth of what I advanced."

He laughed, and ſaid, "If he knew where ſhe lived, (for I had not told him that) he would wait upon her, and tell her what a pretty boaſting fellow ſhe had got for a lover."

"Not minding what I did juſt then, I told him I was not afraid of his rivalling me in her good graces, ſo we both walked out together, and I ſhewed him the houſe, and explained to him how every thing was carried on, and how I had firſt diſcovered the whole affair; but as ſoon as we parted, he went and repeated

repeated to the Preſident every thing I had told him, and I was but juſt awake in the morning, before he brought me an order to attend the Preſident in his ſtudy. I really hardly recollected what had paſſed the preceding evening; however, this meſſage brought a confuſed notion of my folly into my head, and I was very much afraid La Fleur had told the Preſident all that had paſſed between us, knowing he was very much attached to him. My ſuſpicions were ſoon confirmed, for the moment I entered, the Preſident aſked me, in a very ſevere tone of voice,"

"What ſtory that was, I had told La Fleur over night."

"I ſaid I really did not recollect, and only knew that I was very tipſy, and if I had ſaid any thing to offend his Lordſhip, I was very ſorry for it; as I was very apt to talk nonſenſe when in liquor, and it was

very mean of I a Fleur to repeat what I ſaid, when I was hardly ſenſible."

This ſpeech, by no means abated your father's ſeverity, ſir, he looked at me very ſternly, ſaying,

"And ſo you have abſolutely forgot every thing you ſaid laſt night?"

"Yes, indeed my Lord; but I believe I was laughing about ſome of the Count's miſtreſs's."

"Mighty well," ſays the Preſident, "then by way of refreſhing your memory, I will ſend you into a dungeon, where air and converſation won't diſſipate your ideas, and there, I dare ſay, you will ſoon recollect what you ſaid to I a Fleur, and don't preſume to ſuppoſe that your maſter will protect you, as I mean to inform him, as ſoon as I ſee him, what a faithful ſervant you are, therefore I leave you to gueſs how ſtrongly he will take your

your part: however, if you inſtantly acknowledge, what it will be uſeleſs for you to deny, I will not put my threats into execution, nor will I mention what you have diſcovered, to your maſter, and ſhould he find it out, I will protect you, and make you a handſome preſent beſides."

My dread of your reſentment was ſo great, that I told the Preſident all I knew, and he aſſured me, that you ſhould never know from him that he was acquainted with your ſecret. When I had concluded, he gave me a handful of Louis d'Ors, ſaying,

" I mean to be farther your friend, but you muſt bring this Elizabeth over to our intereſt, and be ſure take care ſhe don't betray us either to my ſon or her miſtreſs, for if ſhe does, you ſhall anſwer for both."

" Two days after this, ſir, he ſent you into Poitou; he knew I ſhould accompany you, ſo he deſired I would write to him every

week, and give him an account of all your actions. I forgot to tell you, ſir, that before we ſet off, he wiſhed to ſee Elizabeth, ſo we took an opportunity of meeting him when ſhe went out to market, the very day before you ſet out, and ſhe promiſed to obey his orders very punctually. She dared not diſoblige me then, for ſhe was with child, and I declared I would abandon her, if ſhe refuſed to conform to the Preſident's orders. He deſired her to wait upon him once a week, at an hour he appointed, being the time ſhe uſually went to market, and told her he would make it worth her while, as well as mine, to keep his ſecrets.

" When we returned out of Portou, I was not at all ſurpriſed when you was ſtopped in the Foreſt of Chatelherault, having ſeen La Fleur at the village where we had ſlept the night before, who informed me how it would happen, for he was at the head of the party who ſtopped you, and he helped me to load your piſtols over night, that no accident might

might happen, ſo we only filled them with a little bran, and put a little powder, that they might flaſh in the pan, and wrenched your ſword ſo at the hilt, we were almoſt certain you would break it in attempting to draw it.

" You were to be conducted, I underſtood, to a Nobleman's caſtle of your father's acquaintance, at ſome diſtance, whoſe brother had died raving mad in the apartment you was to occupy; ſo when you was ſecured, ſir, I ſet off, according to La Fleur's orders, for Paris, to inform the Preſident how well every thing had ſucceeded. I did not go to the hotel, but ſent him a note by a Savoyard, who returned in leſs than a quarter of an hour, with a written order to attend your father next day, at the Palace of Juſtice, between ten and eleven. I then ran into the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, wiſhing to ſpeak with Elizabeth, but after looking about for ever ſo long, I could not ſee any light in any of the windows, though it was ſufficiently dark and late to have uſed candles, ſo inquired at a Cabinet

Makers who lives juſt oppoſite, if the people in the great houſe were at home, and he informed me that the lady who had lived there, had left it for good, he believed, two days before.

" I now thought your father would perhaps inform me what was become of Elizabeth, as I ſuppoſed he had occaſioned the removal of both her miſtreſs and her; but happening to recollect I had often taken Elizabeth to ſee a waſherwoman of my acquaintance, during our intimacy, and had wrote to her twice, while I was in Poitou, under cover, to this woman; I went there, thinking ſhe had moſt likely left word there where I might find her, and there I found a letter, dated two days before, in which ſhe informed me ſhe had ſet out for London, to avoid your reſentment; and as ſhe had a great deal of money, as much as we both ſhould want, ſhe adviſed me, if I loved her as much as I had always told her I did, to follow her thither, which I did, ſir, after having ſeen the Preſi-

dent,

dent, who approved of my intentions, and made me another preſent.

" As ſoon as I arrived in London, I flew to Elizabeth's mother, where I found her, and very ſoon married her; we were very ſpeedily bleſſed with a daughter, and no two people would be happier, ſir, if it was not for the reproaches we are continually making ourſelves for having betrayed the confidence of ſo good a maſter and miſtreſs; and this is the real truth, ſir, as all I know, I can aſſure you, as God is my judge. So pray forgive me, ſir, falling once more at my feet; if my wife can give you any further ſatisfaction, pray ſir queſtion her."

" I now, after deſiring him to riſe, turned to the wife, and put ſome queſtions to her."

" She proteſted ſhe did not know where my wife was, and only hoped I would forgive her, as ſhe was really drawn in to betray her dear good miſtreſs, and when once my father

had got her in hand, ſhe never dare refuſe to anſwer any queſtion he put to her, as he often threatened her with the ſevereſt puniſhment, if ſhe even attempted to deceive him. He inquired particularly," ſhe continued, "when my lady went out, and where ſhe went to, and many ſuch kind of things, your honor, and ſo about ſix weeks after you was gone, or not quite ſo much, I believe, as my lady and I were going to maſs, as we always uſed to do very early of a morning, we were ſtopped by a man, who took hold of my miſtreſs's arm, and ſaid ſhe muſt go with him, by an order from the King, and immediately made her get into a hackney coach he had in waiting. I did not expect this, and was not ſure whether I ſhould not be taken away, and ſhut up too, but I ſoon loſt ſight of them, for I ſtood in the ſame place for ever ſo long, crying and fretting like any thing, to think I had loſt my poor dear lady, and all through my own fault. I did not know what to do, but returned, at laſt, all in tears, to our own houſe, never expecting to proſper after ſuch a baſe action,

action, for the Preſident could not have carried her off but for me.

" Well, ſir, when I got home, there was the Preſident ſtanding at our door, which I had the key of; he burſt out a laughing to ſee me in tears, and bid me open the door, which I did, and he went into the houſe with me. I then aſked him to let me follow my miſtreſs, but he would not agree to that, he only ſaid,

" She was very ſafe, and he would adviſe me to ſell all the furniture there was in the houſe, and my miſtreſs's cloaths, which ſhe had left behind (for he ſhould take care ſhe did not want for any thing) and to ſet out for England as faſt as poſſible, for fear you ſhould diſcover me when you returned, and make me repent of what I had done."

" After this, ſir, he left me, and the devil, to be ſure, filled my head with avaricious notions, for I went immediately and got a bro-

ker to come and buy every thing there was in the houſe, and to fetch all away that very day. He gave me what he choſe, but I thought it was a power of money, and by ten o'clock that night, the houſe was cleared.

" I then went and took a place in the diligence, which ſet out for London early the next morning, ſo I waited upon the Preſident, late as it was, to inform him I had executed his orders, and was going to ſet off, and he told me to tell my miſtreſs's relations ſhe was dead, if they inquired for her, and I have never ſeen him ſince, ſir, as I have a ſoul to be ſaved. I left a letter, as my huſband told you, for him at Paris, and in leſs than ten days after my arrival here, he joined me, but indeed I have not been happy in my own mind ever ſince; we have got a great deal of money, ſir, which I am very willing to return, for I know it an't our juſt due, and your pardon, ſir, would do us more good than all the wealth in the world."

Here

Here she stopped, again bursting in tears.

"I sincerely forgive you both, and as a proof, take that," giving them what money I had about me; and am excessively happy to find you are not near so guilty as I thought you were."

Elizabeth, to whom I made the offer, refused, saying, "I was too good," but Jasmin took it, and said "it was not manners to refuse any thing from a man of my consequence," and both left the room in tears.

But their sorrows by no means alleviated mine. Was it possible, I thought, that my father could have acted so basely? Yes, I was too well convinced he had, and what to do now, I could not tell, certain I had every thing to dread from his implacable temper, of which he had given such proofs, since neither the sorrow he had beheld me a prey to for the last six months, nor my declining health, had induced him to relieve my anxiety.

I now

I now thought it very poſſible my wife might be dead, conſidering the ſituation ſhe was in when he had her carried off. I was revolving all this in my own mind, without reflecting where I was, 'till the Baronet and his lady, feeling for my diſtreſs, did all in their power to conſole me, and could not help making a few reflections upon the laws of France, in which I ſincerely joined; they took no notice of the part my father had acted; yet, his behaviour certainly could not appear in a more amiable light to them than it did to me, though they were not equal ſufferers from it.

They entreated I would make their houſe my home, during my ſtay in London. I thanked them for their politeneſs, but ſaid, "I meant to return to France immediately."

"As they only wiſhed to ſerve me now, they ſaid they would interfere in the buſineſs through the medium of the Britiſh Ambaſſador, if I thought it would be of any ſervice."

"I thanked

" I thanked them for their kind offer, but could not foreſee any good could ariſe from ſuch an interference, as my wife was, in every reſpect, now a French ſubject; I would try my own power, and run every riſk, to have my wife and child reſtored to me, if they ſtill lived; but if I found their mediation at all likely to produce the wiſhed for end, I would freely requeſt them to employ it in my favour; at all events, I would do myſelf the honour of writing to them, knowing how much they were intereſted in my ſucceſs."

I then took my leave, and returned to the Hotel in Pall-Mall, where I had alighted; I ſlept only one night in London, and that was ſpent in forming plans how to diſcover my wife's retreat, or how to ſoften my father, whom I could hardly think of with patience.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

I SET off next morning very early, for Dover, and arrived the third evening, at my father's Hotel in Paris, where I learnt, upon inquiring for him, he was at this very houſe. I followed him hither immediately, determined not to reſt 'till I had ſeen him.

I had been forming reſolutions the whole way from London, to behave with coolneſs and deliberation at firſt, to ſee what effect

that might have upon him, but forgot all my good intentions when I arrived, for hearing he was in this very room, I rushed in, without ceremony, and flung myself at his feet. He looked amazed, guessing most probably I was then ascending Mount Cenis. I was really so fatigued, and in such agitation, I could not speak for a few moments; he looked tenderly at me, I thought, and said,

"What is the matter, my dear boy? why these tears, and what has brought you back so soon?"

"My dear father," I replied, when I could speak, "have pity upon your unfortunate son, take back the life you gave me, or restore me my wife and child."

I saw he was thunderstruck at the moment, but almost instantly recovering himself, said, very haughtily,

"Pray

"Pray what does all this mean, Count? I really cannot comprehend you?—a wife and a child, why you never informed me you were married; have you taken such a step without my consent? and is that the reason of this great sorrow? leave me this moment, you are either in liquor or mad, undoubtedly, or you would not behave so absurdly; let me advise you to go to bed, you look quite wild; when sleep has dissipated the effects of the wine you have been drinking, you will be shocked, I am convinced, at your own folly."

This answer to my earnest request, almost made me forget he was my father. I stifled my emotion as well as I could, and assured him, very coolly, "that my odd behaviour did not proceed from the cause he was pleased to attribute it to. My sorrow and wild anxiety proceeded from the loss of a woman I adored, my wife, whom I was now convinced he had shut up some where."

I hardly

I hardly know which was moſt predominant upon his countenance, amaze or anger; he remained ſilent for ſome time, while I continued ſaying every thing I could think of to ſoften him in my favour, entreating he would forgive my having taken a ſtep, he had in a manner forced me to, as it was really contrary to my inclination; I had married without his conſent.

"I am quite at a loſs, Count," ſays he, "to diſcover what you wiſh, or what you mean, therefore, once more I repeat, leave my preſence; if you have acted as you ſay, you are unworthy the name of my ſon, and if it was in my power, after the confeſſion you have choſe to make, you may depend upon it I would not give you any information."

I inſtantly roſe from my humble poſture, and quitted the room without ſpeaking, fearful I ſhould forget, the man who treated me thus cruelly was my father.

The

The horſes were not taken from my chaiſe when I went out. I had not ſeen La Fleur, either here or at Paris, but did not chuſe to make any inquiries concerning him, preſuming he was left at Paris, as he was in general; I therefore ſtepped into my carriage again, without ſpeaking to any body, only ordering the poſtillions to drive back as faſt as they could, determined to ſee La Fleur, and to make him acknowledge what he had done with my wife, convinced he was the only ſervant in my father's confidence; but what was my ſurpriſe, upon arriving at the Hotel, (where I inſtantly inquired for him) to learn he had been buried the night before, which had been the occaſion of my father's journey to Corbeil.

I could hardly credit the Porter; "La Fleur dead? what was his diſorder, pray?" poſitively not believing him, I had been ſo taken in by my father and valet.

"He

"He died, ſir," ſays the Porter, "of a wound he received in a quarrel with the police guards laſt week; he was very tipſy, and very riotous, and would not be taken, ſo he got wounded in the ſcuffle, and is ſince dead."

I now found myſelf reduced to regret the death of my greateſt enemy, and one againſt whom I had vowed vengeance, from the very bottom of my ſoul.

While the Porter and I were ſtill talking, my father's coach drove into the court, full ſpeed; he was come to ſee after me, I preſume; and though he had deſired me, not more than an hour before, never to appear before him again, he now ſeemed quite calm. I reflected he was my father, and my love for my wife, made me overlook the affronts I had received from him, ſo I retired into the apartment I always occupied in his houſe. It was now near ſupper time, and I had not decided whether to appear at table or not

not, when the butler brought me word my father waited for me. Rather flattered by this meſſage, I followed the ſervant into the eating parlour, and ſat down without aſking any queſtions. I expected to have found my father in much the ſame temper I had left him in at Corbeil, but was greatly miſtaken; he treated me with his uſual friendſhip, and ſeemed to have forgot all that had paſſed between us during our firſt meeting. As he did not renew the ſubject, I thought I had beſt not, ſo retired early, and paſſed the following day in the utmoſt harmony with him, and ſo on 'till the third after my arrival, expecting every moment he would give me the wiſhed for information: nay, I ſometimes flattered myſelf he meant to ſurpriſe me agreeably, with the ſight of my wife and child: what pleaſing deluſions; but finding ſo much time eſcape, my hopes vaniſhed, and my impatience increaſed, ſo I reſolved to put the queſtion to him very earneſtly once more, let what would be the conſequence; there-

fore

fore mentioned it after dinner, as we happened to be alone.

"If you cannot ſtart a more agreeable ſubject, Count," ſays my father, "I deſire you would remain ſilent."

It was too near my heart, and I was too much intereſted in endeavouring to obtain the wiſhed for intelligence, to allow me to obey him, and a ſerious quarrel enſued between us, which terminated in his once more deſiring me to quit his houſe for ever.

I obeyed, and returned to the one I ſtill poſſeſſed in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, where I really led the life of a Hermit, only kept one ſervant, and employed the chief of my time in making the moſt exact ſearches in every convent in Paris, and every houſe of force, or more properly, of correction, where there was the leaſt likelihood of my meeting with either my wife or my child. I ſpent conſiderable ſums in charity, and engaged

ſeveral Friars in my intereſt; by this means, and ſometimes aſſuming different orders of Monks myſelf, in company with one or other of the holy tribe, viſiting all the convents within twenty leagues of the capital, where I made inquiries, by different names, and under different pretences, very certain the real one would not avail me, but could not gain the ſlighteſt intelligence of the perſon I looked for.

I once more viſited all the pariſh regiſters in the various churches in Paris, and the environs, to diſcover if ſhe was dead, but all in vain.

In theſe melancholy occupations, I conſumed two tedious years, when perfectly tired of my very exiſtence, I formed the reſolution of leaving Paris for ever, but before I ſat out, thought I would pay my father one more viſit, though he had never made any inquiries either about me, or my way of life, ſince we laſt parted. However, I humbled myſelf ſo far

ſar once more, determined this ſhould be my laſt attempt to ſoften his flinty heart.

He allowed me to ſee him, but the reception he gave me, ſufficiently cancelled the obligation he laid me under, he told me,

"I was a moſt ungrateful child, and had imbibed all my mother's romantic fooliſh principles."

"I ſaid I gloried in them, for never was there a better woman." In ſhort, he peremptorily refuſed giving me any ſatisfaction, and inſiſted upon my leaving his houſe.

"I certainly will, ſir, never more to return to it; you ſhall never have the pleaſure of repeating your unnatural commands to me, and when you learn the death of your only, and unfortunate ſon, you may perhaps repent your harſh treatment of him."

With theſe words I left him, and quitted Paris as I had intended. I went to a ſmall hunting ſeat I had in Brittany, where I remained three years; ſolitude, temperance, and the pure air I breathed, in ſome meaſure re-eſtabliſhed my health. I ſpent my time chiefly in ſtudying the law, and my hours of relaxation, in gardening. I was really become tolerably reconciled to my way of life, when one day I received a letter, expreſs from my father's ſteward, who wrote, by his order, to inform me he was very ill, and wiſhed to ſee me before he died, entreating therefore I would loſe no time.

I ſet off in leſs than an hour, and never ſtopped, except to change horſes, 'till I arrived in Paris; and notwithſtanding my diligence, I was very near being too late; but he was ſtill alive, and retained all his ſenſes; had aſked for me ſeveral times, I was informed, at intervals when he could ſpeak. He knew me the moment he ſaw me; looked very wiſtfully at me, and made me a ſign to approach

approach nearer. I leant over him, and he made an effort to extend his arms, to give me his bleſſing; after which the tears ran very plentifully down his cheeks, which excited mine, as notwithſtanding the barbarity with which he had treated me, I prayed very fervently for his recovery, as I was really very much attached to him, and was convinced, if he recovered, he would no longer keep me in ſuſpenſe, concerning my wife and child; though I own I never hoped to ſee either of them again, as his inveterate obſtinacy had confirmed the ſuſpicions I entertained of their death.

He made ſeveral unſucceſsful efforts to ſpeak, though he ſeemed to underſtand all we ſaid, and a friend of his, who was ſtanding near the bedſide, ſaid to me, rather in a low voice, "I had better aſk him now what was become of my wife," for all his friends, as well as mine, knew the occaſion of our late quarrel.

My father caught what this gentleman faid, though he ſeemed engaged in mental prayer while he was ſpeaking, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, faid ſomething I could not underſtand.

"Is my wife dead, ſir, have I loſt her for ever, afford me the only conſolation that may be now in your power, relieve me from the ſuſpenſe I have ſo long been in."

He again tried to ſpeak, and made the ſign of the croſs, ſeemed to pity me, giving me to underſtand ſhe was ſtill alive, and in ſome convent; he was not able to articulate, ſo as to be underſtood. Finding I could gain ſo little intelligence, though he ſeemed as anxious now to inform me, as I was to hear what he had to ſay, I wiſhed him to have wrote his meaning, as he ſtill poſſeſſed the uſe of his hands. I mentioned my thought to him, he ſeemed pleaſed at the idea, and his friend and I raiſed him up in his bed for that purpoſe, but the effort was too much

for

for him, he only gave a deep ſigh, and expired in my arms, ſo the only information I obtained concerning my wife, was, that ſhe was alive, and in ſome convent; but there are ſo many in France, that after all the trouble and pains I had taken, I almoſt deſpaired of ever finding her, judging a letter de cachet had been the means, moſt probably, of confining her.

Theſe reflections, I muſt own, ſerved very much to abate the ſorrow I ſhould otherwiſe have felt for my father's death.

As I had been brought up to the law, I was very ſoon put in poſſeſſion of the place he held, which I accepted very willingly, having great hopes I might gain ſome intelligence concerning my wife, as ſoon as my father's death became publick, and I took care to have it repeated often enough in the different papers.

During ſix months, theſe hopes ſupported me, and every name I was not acquainted with, that my ſervant announced to me, I expected would bring me the wiſhed for intelligence. How often have my anxious hopes been diſappointed, in diſcovering their own private buſineſs alone made them ſeek my preſence, and which the duties of my place obliged me to liſten to.

One day, being at dinner with a party of friends, as I ſaw a great deal of company, more for the ſake of diſſipating my ennui, than from any great amuſement I derived from their converſation, in the midſt of the deſert a ſervant came in, and ſaid, a nun wiſhed to ſee me.

"I have informed her your Lordſhip had company, but ſhe will not take a denial, ſhe muſt ſee your Lordſhip now, upon buſineſs of the utmoſt importance."

"Shew

"Shew her in, ſhew her in," ſays I, jumping up, not being uſed to theſe kind of viſitors; it ſtruck me ſhe certainly was the herald of the wiſhed for intelligence; I therefore flew to meet her; ſhe was in waiting cloſe to the door. As I was hurrying round the table, perhaps, thought I, the happy moment may be arrived, it may be my Eugenia, but this tranſport was ſoon checked, by the appearance of a ſort of lay ſiſter, very ſtout and ſhort, I therefore aſſumed as indifferent an air as I could, preſuming my friends muſt think me almoſt mad.

She ſtopped as ſoon as ſhe got within the door, and with her arms croſſed before her, made a dozen courteſeys at leaſt, in their way, which you know is rather particular.

Sick of this affectation, and very impatient to diſcover what had brought me ſuch an unexpected gueſt,

"What do you want with me, my good ſiſter? what buſineſs of importance have you to communicate to me?"

Without anſwering me, ſhe began to feel in her pocket.

"I am really not at leiſure now, ſo pray let me know your buſineſs."

"My Lord," ſays ſhe, again curtſying, "I am Touriere to the Holy Monaſtery of * * *, and our moſt revered, and well beloved Lady Abbeſs, has done me the honour to ſend me to your Lordſhip with a letter, which ſhe particularly ordered me to deliver into your Lordſhip's own hands."

She was going on, but I ſtopped her very impatiently, ſaying,

"Where is the letter? give it me this moment?"

She

She ſtarted, (as I addreſſed her in a very peremptory tone) looked at me with ſurpriſe expreſſed in her countenance, and at laſt ventured to pull her hand out of her pocket, producing a pocket book, worked in the moſt elegant ſtyle; I dare ſay it was wrapped up in half a dozen papers, and with the greateſt caution ſhe began to unwrap them, one by one, doubling each up in its proper form, before ſhe proceeded to remove the next. At laſt I was favoured with a ſight of this fine ſilk book, which was tied with half a dozen pink ribbons; how I had the patience to wait all this time, aſtoniſhes me even now, but it was a lady I had to deal with. When ſhe got the precious receptacle open, ſhe took out a letter, which ſhe meant to have delivered to me in form, but as ſoon as it was within my reach, I fairly ſnatched it out of her hand, and without looking at the direction, I tore it open, and read theſe words, as near as I can recollect.

" My Lord,

" The late Lord, your father, for the ſalvation of whoſe ſoul, me, and all my nuns, are bound for ever to pray, did me the ſupreme honour to entruſt to my care, about ſix years and a half ago, one of his relations; he took this ſtep, no doubt, for very good and wiſe reaſons, though he did not think proper to communicate them to me: he only deſired I would hide her from the whole earth, and I have obeyed his orders, my Lord, with all poſſible preciſion and regularity, though at the ſame time I have treated the young lady with the utmoſt kindneſs; indeed, except liberty, ſhe has had every other enjoyment ſhe could deſire. I muſt alſo take the liberty of informing your Lordſhip, that the late Lord, your father, always paid for this lady's board before hand, knowing the poverty of our houſe; but underſtanding the loſs both you and we have ſuſtained, my Lord, and not having had any inquiries concerning our border, ſince the late Lord's death, I muſt

entreat

entreat your Lordſhip would inform me who I am to apply to for our future payment; the young lady is ſtill in ignorance of the death of her illuſtrious relation, as I thought ſhe might be hurt by the intelligence; I therefore wait, with all due reſpect, to learn your Lordſhip's pleaſure, to which I ſhall conform myſelf in every reſpect, &c. &c."

I could not make any remarks upon the letter juſt then, I was ſo happy, not having a doubt but I had at laſt diſcovered my wife, ſo forgetting I had any company, I ran to the bell, and ordered my carriage to be got ready as ſoon as poſſible. I then aſked the Touriere a thouſand queſtions ſhe was utterly unable to anſwer.

" She never went into the interior of the convent, and ſhe really could not give me any intelligence concerning who was within the great gates, the nuns only, to her knowledge, for they never took any borders."

The very reaſon why my father had preferred it, I was convinced.

I muſt wait upon the lady Abbeſs, if I wanted to learn any thing more, ſhe had done her duty."

"That you have," ſays I, ſeizing the poor old creature, and beginning to kiſs her in my tranſport; I have been told ſince, by ſome of my friends who were preſent, they thought I ſhould have ſtifled her; I only know I ſtopt when the ſcreams of the antiquated virgin rung in my ears, for I had quite ſhocked her modeſty, ſo to conſole her for my impolite behaviour, I put twenty Louis d'ors into her hand, for bringing me ſuch good tidings.

Since my father's death, my marriage, and its conſequences, had become public, ſo I was not obliged to explain the cauſe of my joy and ſtrange behaviour to my friends; I only ſaid, I had every reaſon in the world to

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe I had found my wife. They all ſelicitated me very ſincerely, and I kept ringing the bell every minute, to inquire whether the carriage was ready, without reflecting that it required rather more time to harneſs ſix horſes, and to put them too, than I had ſpent in giving the order; it was ready at laſt, ſo entreating my friends would make free with my cellar, I ſet out, and made the holy Touriere get into the coach with me. She began to make a hundred objections, but I ſoon cut all her abſurd compliments very ſhort, and away we drove.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

THE Convent was four leagues from Paris, and I really thought it as many hundred, though I had ordered the coachman to drive as faſt as the horſes could lay their legs to the ground. At laſt we arrived, and my fair companion alighted, and announced my arrival. Though it was later than thoſe pious ladies received viſitors in general, I was immediately ſhewn into the Abbeſſes apartment, and ſhe very ſoon made her appearance, having

ing hardly overcome the ſurpriſe my ſpeedy arrival had occaſioned her.

She began to make ten thouſand apologies for the liberty ſhe had taken; hoped I had not come on purpoſe to bring her the money; ſhe did not mean that; ſhe was not ſo far diſtreſſed, but ſhe could have waited 'till I had come that way, or an anſwer by the perſon ſhe ſent, would have been very ſafe. The poverty of the houſe had induced her to break through their general rules; it was not known they had any borders, but my father was ſo good a man, and had ſuch power, that ſhe was confident of his protection, had any thing happened; then he was ſo liberal, where he knew there was real diſtreſs.

I attempted ſeveral times to ſtop this torrent of deceit and hypocriſy in vain, at laſt ſhe vouchſafed to liſten to me. I aſſured her I wiſhed ſhe had ſent for her money ſooner, as ſhe would have relieved me from the greateſt anxiety.

She

She was going to begin again, but ſhe had had her turn, and I was determined to have mine. I therefore deſired ſhe would ſend for the lady immediately; I believe I ſpoke in a tone, which ſhewed I would be obeyed, as the old lady wiſked out of the room in a moment, and in leſs than five minutes returned, followed by my wife, who looked as lovely as ever; nay, even ſtill more intereſting, from the melancholy dejection which appeared upon her countenance.

I caught ſight of her firſt, as ſhe hardly ventured to look up, and cannot expreſs half the joy and tranſport I felt; but when ſhe did raiſe her eyes, the unexpected ſight before her, proved too much for her, ſhe only exclaimed,

"Oh my God!" and inſtantly fainted.

She muſt have fallen to the ground, if the Abbeſs had not caught her in her arms, and began to call for aſſiſtance. My ſoul was all

all on fire; I trembled every joint of me; blamed myſelf very ſeverely for not having had her prepared by degrees, to ſee me: in ſhort, I was half diſtracted, ſeeing her to all appearance dead. I deſired the Abbeſs to open the door, and give her to me that moment, I could bring her to herſelf when ſhe was without, but the good lady was ſhocked at the very idea, foreſeeing, I fancy, ſhe was going to loſe a conſiderable income. Three or four of the nuns, alarmed by the ſcreams of the Abbeſs, entered the inner parlour, and helped to ſupport the lovely Eugenia, while ſome went for vinegar, water, eſſences, &c.

I was ſtill without ſide of the grate, threatening vengeance upon them, and their convent, if they did not open the door. Their faces were all lengthened, and general diſmay prevailed: what the holy ſiſterhood took me for I cannot ſay, a madman I ſuppoſe; at laſt the Abbeſs approached the bars, and hoped I would hear reaſon.

" She

" She was certain I could not think of removing the lady in the ſtate ſhe was in; it was the air which had overcome her; her fit was merely owing to the confined life ſhe had led; I had much better let her remain a little longer with them, they could take her into the air gradually, by which means ſhe could be accuſtomed to it, but it would be preſent death to expoſe her to it all at once."

You will believe, ſir, how I reliſhed her wiſe arrangements, I therefore deſired her to hold her tongue, and to obey me, or I would make her repent; the lady had, no doubt, by her account, been deprived of the enjoyment of a little freſh air, but ſhe was my wife, and ſhe might tremble for the conſequence, if ſhe had uſed her ill, deſiring ſhe would inſtantly open the great door, and let her come out, or at leaſt let me fetch her out, for ſhe was ſtill lifeleſs in the arms of two nuns.

The Abbeſs ſtood half petrified at what I ſaid to her, but the honour of her houſe

was

was engaged, ſhe muſt either violate the rules of their order, or diſoblige me; having pauſed for a few moments, ſhe ſaid,

"She was exceſſively ſorry ſhe could not comply with my wiſhes, but they could not break through their rules ſo far, as to admit a gentleman within their walls, and as for themſelves, they had made a vow never to go without ſide of the great gates, which was the only way in or out of the Convent; therefore, at al events, I muſt wait 'till the lady was ſufficiently recovered, to walk out of herſelf."

I did as ſhe deſired, for a few moments, but ſeeing ſhe did not recover, my patience again quite forſook me; in ſhort, this old woman's contradiction worked me into a moſt violent rage.

"You don't chuſe to obey me then," ſays I, ſeizing hold of the grate which ſeparated us, and proteſting I would pull it down, if poſſible;

poſſible; it was fortunately for them an iron one, or I am convinced it would ſoon have been broken into a thouſand pieces; nay, ſtrong as it was, I made it ſhake, and I believe another effort would have brought it down.

The old Abbeſs was now moſt ſeriouſly alarmed, ſeeing the fury I was in, ſhe therefore left the room in a violent hurry, and forgetting ſhe had juſt been telling me that men were never allowed to enter their great doors, returned, in leſs than two minutes, with two gardeners ſhe had called from their work, I preſumed, by their dreſs and appearance, and the eldeſt of them was not more than eight and twenty. Theſe men, ſhe ſaid, ſhould bring my wife round to the great gate. The two fellows now raiſed her between them, and I went to the great gates, which were juſt without the Abeſſes parlour, to wait for her. The Nuns opened them rather before the men approached with their lovely charge, I inſtantly

I inſtantly ran in, not thinking I committed a greater ſin than their holy gardeners.

The whole ſiſterhood was aſſembled upon the occaſion, in the cloiſters which led to the ſide doors, ſo I was in a moment in the midſt of the holy tribe, who were all ſhocked to death at my aſſurance, and ſhame and ſacrilege was re-echoed from all quarters; but without paying any attention to the menaces of excommunication this chorus of females hurled after me, I caught my wife in my arms, and hurried her to the coach which was waiting without the door, not perceiving the weight of ſo agreeable a burthen.

I now poſſeſſed her once more, and was certain no power on earth could ever again ſeparate us. I therefore only thought of reſtoring her to her ſenſes, while the Abbeſs and Nuns, whom in my tranſports I had forgot to pay, where ſtill ſtanding at their great gates, which they had not cloſed, and were invoking heaven and earth to revenge my

audacious behaviour, declaring I was the moſt abandoned wretch upon the face of God's earth, to violate the ſacred rules of their holy manſion, and to take away the cauſe of my profane tranſports, without even paying for her board. At laſt the Touriere, who had experienced ſuch a liberal proof of my generoſity, rather quieted them, ſhe then approached the carriage, and wanted to aſſiſt in recovering my wife; but the lovely woman had once or twice opened her eyes, and given me a proof ſhe knew who ſupported her, and after drinking half a glaſs of water, came to herſelf, flung her arms around my neck, and bathed me with her tears. I cannot pretend to ſay which was the happieſt, but when I thought of returning home, I reflected upon what had paſſed among this worthy ſet of people. I had not paid them I knew, therefore I eaſily forgave them, for though my wife had not been treated with much indulgence by them, they were rather excuſable, conſidering they were paid for acting as they had done, and money always had very great

great power with the holy fraternity of friars and Nuns, ſo I ſent them a large doſe of what never fails to quiet the conſcience of ſuch people.

I had filled my purſe with gold before I ſet out, and now put it into the hands of the old Touriere, to deliver to the Abbeſs; to be ſure it contained more than three times the ſum I owed them, and which they did not ſtrictly deſerve; ſhe lifted up her hands and eyes when ſhe received it, ſaying,

"It was the greateſt bleſſing had befallen their houſe for ſome time, inſtantly carrying it to the revered mother, who was ſtill ſtanding at the great gate. She ſent me back the empty purſe; was ſhocked to death ſhe could not thank me in perſon; hoped I would overlook every thing which had paſſed; had ſhe known ſooner who the lady was ſhe had had under her care, ſhe ſhould have acted very differently; ten thouſand thanks for my generous

rous preſent; ſhe and all her nuns would remember us both in their prayers as long as they lived, and ſhe was exceſſively hurt at being ſeparated from her beloved child (meaning my wife) to whom ſhe was particularly attached, though ſhe could not repine, ſince her ſorrow was the ſource of her favourites joy."

I was vaſtly glad when the Touriere concluded this prolix meſſage, for I was much better occupied, than in attending to her unmeaning compliments.

As the horſes had not been refreſhed, I told the ſervants they might take their time in going back; we therefore ſet off, and after having given a few moments to our mutual joy, I aſked after the child I had left her big with.

"Alas!" ſays ſhe, "I was going to aſk you the ſame queſtion, for I have neither ſeen, nor heard of it, ſince it was ſix weeks old,

old, when it was forcibly taken away from me. Oh he was a ſweet boy, but he is certainly dead, or you would have been allowed to have ſeen him."

This anſwer hurt me exceſſively, but concealing my own ſorrow, to ſoften her's, (for I muſt own, I retained very little hopes of ever ſeeing my child again) I endeavoured to perſuade her that ſome happy event, like the one which had reſtored us to each other, might lead to a diſcovery of our loſt ſon; we therefore conſoled each other with this idea, anticipating the pleaſures we had to come, if we were ſo fortunate.

During our ride home, I related to her every thing which had happened to me ſince we had been ſeparated; and ſhe alſo favoured me with her adventures, which I will repeat to you in as few words as poſſible.

"I was drove a very little way in the hackney coach you learnt I was taken away in, it

ſoon ſtopped in a bye ſtreet, and I was ordered to get out, and to ſtep into a gentleman's carriage which was in waiting. To have reſiſted, would have been of no uſe, I therefore did as I was deſired; in this coach was a man and a woman, whom I had never ſeen before, both decently dreſſed, and the woman had a young child about three months old, at her breaſt, which ſhe was ſuckling. The only thing that prevented me from giving way to deſpair, was, my hopes that through Elizabeth, whom I little thought had betrayed me, you would at leaſt diſcover what was become of me, and perhaps be able to find me out through that means.

The moment the coach began to move, the man whom I had found in it, entreated I would not be frightened, as nothing diſagreeable would happen to me. You will believe I paid very little regard to his words; in about a couple of hours the coach ſtopped, and I was ordered to get out. As we had drove all the way with the blinds up,

I had

I had not been able to gueſs what road we had come; I found, upon alighting, we had ſtopped at the door of a ſmall houſe, that ſeemed to be at ſome diſtance from a village I ſaw to the leſt. I was immediately conducted by this man into a very good room, upon the ground floor, that looked into a little garden, which was ſurrounded with very high walls on all ſides. The man very ſoon left me and the woman and child together, double locking the door we had come in at, after him; but in a few minutes ſomebody came to the ſame door, knocked, and called Jane, which was the name of my companion; ſhe approached the door, and a pane in the upper part of it opened, and ſomebody put a baſon of ſoup through, which my companion took, and preſented to me; at firſt I thought of refuſing it, thinking it very likely contained poiſon, but upon a moments reflection, which convinced me I could not ſave my life by any reſiſtance I could make, induced me to accept of it, as I was very faint, not having breakfaſted when they ſtopped me.

" The pane was ſhut as ſoon as Jane returned the baſon, and it was through that we had every thing to eat, given us and taken out again, the whole time I ſtaid there. There was a cloſet in the room, in which I heard a perſon tell Jane ſhe would find every thing ſhe wanted; and their certainly was plenty of coffee, chocolate, tea, ſugar, and liquors, and every article neceſſary for a tea table; ſo my fears for my own, and my child's life, very ſoon ceaſed.

" My companion was very good tempered, and was always ſtriving to pleaſe and amuſe me, very often endeavouring to give me hopes, ſhe moſt likely was certain, would never be realized.

" I had the liberty of walking in the garden our room opened into, with Jane, and my only occupation was helping my companion to nurſe; though after all, my priſon was certainly ſupportable, to what I had dreaded.

" Having

" Having no doubt but the Preſident was the author of all my miſfortunes, I tried, by every gentle means in my power, to make Jane acknowledge as much, but ſhe had been ſworn to ſecreſy, I am confident, as ſhe only gave me very vague anſwers, always concluding, by ſaying, " ſhe was ſure my confinement would ſoon ceaſe, if I choſe it."

" One day ſhe brought me a letter ſhe had received through our pane, that confirmed her words; it contained propoſals to ſet me at liberty the next day, if I would conſent to a diſſolution of our marriage, in which caſe I was to ſign a paper which accompanied the letter, and if I agreed to this requeſt, I ſhould be put in immediate poſſeſſion of a ſufficient ſum of money to enable me to live at my eaſe ever after, in England, where it was expected I ſhould return; that I need not be at all uneaſy about the child I was big with, as I might lay-in where I was, if I choſe, and I might depend upon its being taken particular care of: the epiſtle concluded by aſſuring

me, if I rejected theſe reaſonable propoſals, I ſhould be a priſoner for the reſt of my life, and my child ſhould be ſent to the Foundling Hoſpital, by which means I ſhould for ever loſe ſight of it, and it would be brought up in ignorance and poverty.

" What courſe to purſue I could not tell, but ſoon determined not to ſend any anſwer, thinking the letter was very probably merely a ſnare, to diſcover whether I was really married or not, for I was ignorant of Elizabeth's treachery, conſequently could not know that they had any certain proofs; I therefore returned the letter and paper, as I had received it, and amuſed myſelf as well as I could with Jane, without hearing any thing more for ſome time.

" In the cloſet I have before mentioned, we found every thing requiſite for the child and myſelf, ſo I paſſed my time between hope and fear, pitying my unfortunate infant, who would

would moſt probably ſee day light, for the firſt time, among his enemies.

" Theſe ſorrowful reflections cauſed me many a flood of tears, the occaſion of which I did not hide from Jane, whoſe child, I thought, would be much more fortunate than mine. She did her utmoſt to conſole me, and as I perceived ſhe really pitied me, I inſenſibly became very much attached to her. At laſt I laid-in of a boy, and Jane, who was the only perſon I ever ſaw, from the time I became a priſoner, acted as midwife and nurſe, and I really had no fault to find with her; ſhe took great care both of me and my ſon, whom ſhe ſuckled for the firſt two or three days, having plenty of milk both for him and her own; but as ſoon as I was able, I entreated I might take that taſk upon myſelf; ſhe readily conſented, and the hopes of bringing him up, greatly ſoftened my confinement, as I ſtill flattered myſelf you would diſcover where I was, and ſet both me and your ſon at liberty. I recovered very faſt,

and our child throve amazingly; at the end of a fortnight I was able to leave my bed, and very ſoon to walk in my little garden.

" A few days after I had recovered, I received another letter, in the ſame hand writing as the former. This was much more preſſing, as they deſired a ſpeedy and poſitive anſwer, informing me they were acquainted with my whole adventure, which they detailed to me, taking up from my mother's death, without omitting any material circumſtance that had occurred ſince. They hoped I ſhould conſult my own advantage, by acceding to their reaſonable propoſals, which would be the laſt I ſhould receive from them; they conſiſted in the ſame offers as before; they only deſired I would reflect upon them, aſſuring me you were perfectly tired of me: in ſhort, I muſt perceive, from the detail they had given me, it was by your deſire they wrote in that manner; I muſt know you were the only perſon that could have intruſted them with our adventures; and they did not mean,

mean, they aſſured me, to impoſe upon me, though I was to have been kept in ignorance of their acting by your deſire.

" The contents of this letter puzzled me exceſſively, though it by no means convinced me of your inconſtancy; I was too well acquainted with your excellent principles, to allow me to ſuſpect you could have acted ſo baſely by me and your helpleſs infant. I only thought you had placed your confidence in ſome perſon who had betrayed it to the Preſident.

" I gave Jane this letter to read, and watched every movement of her countenance while ſhe peruſed it; when ſhe had concluded, I aſked her what ſhe would adviſe me to do."

" Anſwer it, by all means, madam, but I would not irritate thoſe in whoſe power you are, if I was in your ſituation."

" I ſee what riſks I run, but my ſon is legitimate, and I cannot believe his father has acted as they want to perſuade me; at all events, I will not give my conſent to diſhonour him; they may make me as miſerable as I was the reverſe: nay, was I baſe enough to conſult only my own ſecurity, I dare ſay my child's ſituation would not be more fortunate than it will be now; but perhaps one day or other, Divine Providence may ſee juſtice done to us both.

" While Jane and I were talking, ſomebody opened the pane, and put in a ſheet of paper, and a pen and ink, deſiring Jane would tell me to anſwer the letter I had received, and if my anſwer was ſatisfactory, any reaſonable demands I might make, would be complied with.

" I remained for ſome time quite ſilent, revolving every thing that had paſſed, in my mind, at laſt thought I had better write at once, as an anſwer muſt be ſent ſooner or later, either

either in writing, or by word of mouth: however, my letter was very concise, it contained only these few words,

"I reject all your proposals."

"Jane seemed surprised at the speedy conclusion of my epistle."

"What, have you finished already, madam?" said she.

"Yes," said I, giving her the paper.

"She turned pale when she had read what I wrote, and began to argue with me, but I would not listen to her, only desiring she would give the paper as it was, to the person who was waiting for it.

"I was convinced it would irritate my persecutors, and expected, of course, some change would take place in my way of life; I therefore prepared myself to support any

freſh miſfortunes that might befall me, with all the courage I could aſſume, reflecting, I had only done my duty.

" When I was firſt ſtopped, they did not ſearch my pockets: by mere hazard I had ſeveral trinkets about me, among which, was the little enamelled pocket book you gave me upon my birth day. I wrote all I could upon the blank leaves it contained, and obtained a promiſe from Jane, that ſhe would do her utmoſt endeavours to deliver it to you, if ſhe was ever at liberty without me, and made her ſwear, in the moſt ſolemn manner, ſhe would take care of my ſon, if we were parted, and he ſhould be left under her care. She ſeemed very fond of him, and I felt myſelf relieved, after having exacted theſe promiſes from her.

" We remained quiet after this for a few days, ſo I began to hope that an eternal priſon in that ſolitary room, was all the puniſhment the Preſident meant to inflict upon me; but

but I ſoon found myſelf miſtaken, for one morning, at day-break, I heard our door open, for the firſt time ſince our confinement. The very ſound of the hinges made me tremble, as my firſt idea was, I might perhaps be ſeparated from my child. My fears were but too ſoon verified, I put by my curtain, and perceived two men ſtanding in the middle of the room, one of whom deſired me to get up immediately. My terror ſoon made me obey their inſolent orders; they remained in the room all the time I was dreſſing, and hardly gave me time to put my clothes on, before they told me I muſt inſtantly accompany them in a carriage they had in waiting, to the place where I was to end my days, ſince I choſe to be obſtinate. I only entreated time to get ready, and when ſo, took my ſon in my arms, hoping I ſhould be allowed to take him with me; in that caſe it would have been very equal to me where I went; but one of theſe barbarians ſnatched him from me, and flung him into Jane's arms, who had got out of bed, and

and was ſtanding, half naked, by my ſide, hardly knowing whether ſhe was to go or ſtay. I entreated hard for a few moments, but in vain, one of the men ſeized me, and dragged me along, with the other's help, ſo all I could ſay was, to entreat Jane to remember her promiſes.

" A coach was waiting at the ſame door I had alighted at, and they liſted me in all but dead; I only recollect I fainted as ſoon as within the carriage, but this did not retard our journey. I cannot ſay how long I remained inſenſible, but when I came to myſelf, had neither ſtrength nor ſpirits to ſpeak, nor would it have been of any uſe, for my conductors ſeemed inſenſible of pity.

" About eleven o'clock the coach ſtopped at the gate of the Convent I have juſt quitted; they deſired me to alight, and walk in; I did as ordered, without knowing where I was, or paying any attention to the entrance.

The

The firſt idea I had of being in a Convent, aroſe from finding myſelf between two Nuns, who ſhut the great doors the moment I had entered.

" As I had dreaded much worſe treatment even than this, I was comparatively happy, as from the care my perſecutors ſeemed inclined to take of me, I concluded they would not neglect my child; indeed, his innocence alone, I thought, would plead powerfully in his favour, and was in hopes, that in time I might be able to bribe ſomebody in this Convent to convey a letter to you, for I ſtill thought you faithful, notwithſtanding the Preſident's letters, my late and preſent confinement.

" I was immediately conducted into a room, which no doubt had been previouſly prepared for me, for it was inſtantly locked, and was left alone for a quarter of an hour, to make my reflections, I preſumed. At the expiration of that time, my door opened, and a ſiſter

a ſiſter Nun brought me my dinner, though it was not more than half after eleven; but this did not ſurpriſe me, knowing it was the uſual dinner hour in convents.

" I tried to eat, and to appear compoſed, wiſhing to commence an acquaintance with this new attendant; but when I addreſſed her, ſhe put her finger upon her mouth, and gave me to underſtand ſhe was ordered ſilence; I had ſtill hopes that a ſmall preſent would unſeal her lips, but now diſcovered, for the firſt time, that in my hurry and flight in the morning, I had forgot my pocket, finding myſelf therefore deprived of the means of gaining her over to my intereſt, I gave myſelf up to unavailing ſorrow. She left me as ſoon as I had dined; but about an hour afterwards, the Abbeſs came to pay me a viſit.

" She informed me, that except the liberty of leaving my room, where ſhe alone ſhould viſit me, I might aſk for any thing I wiſhed for. I wanted to convince her how unjuſtly I was

I was detained, hoping to obtain her pity; but she instantly interrupted me, telling me, if I wished to see her again, I must resolve never to mention my affairs to her again. She was not acquainted with my story, and had made a promise never to listen to it; she therefore chose to fulfil her engagement; she neither wished to know who I was, nor why I had been placed under her protection: in a word, she meant to obey the injunctions she had received, with the utmost punctuality. She very soon quitted me, repeating what she had already said, that I might ask for what I chose, as my desires would be immediately complied with. I presume the sister Nun informed the Abbess of the attempt I had made to draw her into conversation, as I only slept one night in that room, and was shewn into another, fifty times worse, in point of situation. This one had a pane in the door, like the one in my former prison, through which they gave me my dinner and supper, and a sister Nun always made my bed while the Abbess was with me.

" This

"This room had only one window, which overlooked a little paved court, where hardly any body ever paſſed, and it was with difficulty I perceived thoſe that did, for the bars of my window were ſo cloſe, I could hardly get my hand through them.

"For ſix years and a half I remained thus confined, and never ſaw a ſoul, except the Abbeſs and the ſiſter Nun, already mentioned, who made my bed in her preſence, for ſhe viſited me every day at the ſame hour, and commonly paſſed a couple with me. She really treated me very affectionately, which, in ſome meaſure, prevented me from giving way to deſpair, for after the firſt twelvemonth, I gave up all hopes of ever ſeeing you again: but what was my ſurpriſe this very day, when I heard my door open, and two Nuns, whom I had never ſeen before, enter; the Abbeſs had left me about an hour before; after a vaſt many compliments, theſe good ladies told me a gentleman wiſhed to ſee me in the Abbeſſes parlour. At firſt I thought they were going

to

to remove me into ſome other apartment, or elſe had come to inform me they were allowed to viſit me in future: but the news they brought me, quite aſtoniſhed me; I followed them, my legs trembling every ſtep I took, was almoſt afraid they would not have performed their ſhort journey.

"I thought, when coming down ſtairs, it could only be your father, of whoſe death I was ignorant, convinced, in my own mind, he alone knew where I was; but my ſurpriſe and joy quite overcame me, when I ſaw who it really was; and only now wonder I ſurvived ſo agreeable a tranſition."

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

WE were ſtill relating paſt occurrences, when we found ourſelves upon the pavement of Paris. My wife's ride, contrary to the Abbeſſes predictions, had done her a great deal of good. She was now in her twenty-fifth year, and except in point of colour, which ſhe ſoon recovered, was as beautiful as ever: in ſhort, I never could repent of the preference I had given her, and believe, without appearing vain, I may ſay ſhe always pays me the

the ſame compliment. No two people, I am ſure, would be ſo compleatly happy, if our felicity was not greatly damped by the conſtant regret we both feel, for the loſs of our only ſon, whom we have not any chance now, of ever ſeeing again; and though we have had ſeveral children ſince, they have all died during their infancy: but to come to the moſt eſſential part of my ſtory.

Sixteen years had paſſed ſince our re-union, during which time we had made the moſt diligent ſearch after our child, and for the woman who took care of my wife during her laying-in, and with whom ſhe left her ſon, without ſucceſs: in ſhort, our hopes of ever ſeeing, or hearing of him again, were quite vaniſhed. When one evening, as we were ſitting alone after ſupper, talking about this unfortunate youth, whoſe deſtiny we ſincerely deplored, we were interrupted by a ſervant, who came in and told us, a woman of a very mean appearance, wiſhed to ſee us both immediately, if poſſible, having ſomething

of

of the greateſt importance to communicate to us.

Our hopes once more returned, from the deſcription of the woman, and her chuſing ſuch a time of night for her viſit. Being juſt then full of the ſubject, it naturally occurred to us, ſhe brought us news of our child. We ordered her to be ſhewn in, and never were two people in greater anxiety, 'till ſhe made her appearance, though we each tried to perſuade the other to be prepared for a diſappointment.

She entered, was very plainly dreſſed, quite like a peaſant of the lower claſs. She ſeemed confuſed, begged pardon for coming at ſuch an hour, but a friend of her's, who could not die in peace, 'till ſhe had ſeen me, had obliged her to intrude upon our goodneſs, becauſe this friend was acquainted with ſomething which concerned me very much, and which ſhe wiſhed to reveal to me before ſhe died.

I aſked

I aſked her a few queſtions concerning this ſecret, but ſhe aſſured me very frankly, ſhe did not know what it was, though ſhe had taken a vaſt deal of pains to make her friend truſt her with it, for fear it ſhould pleaſe God to call her before ſhe had ſeen me. She had known the ſick woman for many years, ſhe ſaid, and they were now near neighbours, but ſhe really would not have come at that time of night, only ſhe was afraid her friend would not live 'till morning.

I believe we both felt a damp to our hopes, but it being poſſible this ſecret might concern our ſon, ſaid I would accompany her to her friend immediately; delay ſeemed dangerous, and I ſhould have blamed myſelf ever afterwards, had I let this woman have died, without hearing what ſhe had to ſay; therefore ordered the carriage.

My wife was very much agitated, between hope and fear. "Perhaps," ſaid ſhe, when the woman had left the room, "this may be

be ſome wicked plot, to get me out at that time of night, merely to rob me; not a very unlikely conjecture, from the woman's appearance, and the deſcription of where ſhe lived."

I tried to diſſipate her fears, but my reaſoning was of little avail; ſhe only entreated I would allow her to accompany me; though at worſt, I reply'd, it could only be a very ſhallow artifice to obtain a little money from me. Some old ſervant, perhaps, who wanted to excite my pity, and ſhe would only be in the way, ſuppoſe that really was the caſe; but I would take ſeveral ſervants with me, ſo ſhe might be certain I ſhould not run any riſk, whatever might be at the bottom of this ſilly affair.

One of my ſervants informed me the carriage was ready, and as he left the door open while he went to fetch ſomething I ſent him for, the woman who ſtood in the antichamber, heard us talking, and me entreating my

my wife would remain at home, ſhe therefore advanced, ſaying, "ſhe had forgot to tell us, that Madame Mallette, her friend, begged the favour of ſeeing her Ladyſhip too, if poſſible."

I was now obliged to agree to my wife's wiſhes, and we got into the coach, taking our ambaſſadreſs with us, for a guide.

She deſired the coachman to drive to the Rue de Gêtre, and to ſtop at the end of the Rue St. Jerome, as the carriage could not drive down it. When we ſtopped, we were convinced of the truth of her aſſertion, as this ſtreet is only two feet and a half wide, therefore, far from admitting a carriage, a luſty perſon would have had ſome difficulty to walk down it; however, its inhabitants ſeemed calculated for the horrid place they lived in, as they certainly neither bore the marks of good cheer, nor opulence. Two people could not walk a breaſt, therefore we followed our conductreſs, one after the other, preceded

by a ſervant with a flambeau, our other ſervants brought up the rear. Our guide ſtopped about the middle of this horrid place, at a little door which we all entered, and proceeded down a long narrow dirty paſſage, 'till we arrived at the foot of a ſtaircaſe, perfectly ſuited to the ſtreet and miſerable houſe, which was ſix ſtories high, and after having aſcended them all, we entered a very low garret, where we perceived a woman lying in bed, which hardly deſerved the appellation.

My wife approached the wretched couch, and the poor ſick creature raiſed herſelf up, ſaying, in a very low broken voice,

"Oh my dear Lady! is it you?—to ſee you once more, and ſo happy, is all I deſired; now I ſhall die contented. I have wiſhed for this moment this many and many a year."

She laid herſelf down again after theſe few words, her weakneſs having overcame her.

My

My wife drew nearer the bed, and ſtood looking at her, having taken a candle in her hand, to ſee if ſhe knew her; I found ſhe did not recollect her, though the poor woman convinced us, neither her eye ſight, nor her memory, had failed her.

When ſhe was a little recovered, ſhe looked very wiſtfully at my wife, ſaying,

"I ſee your Ladyſhip has forgot poor Jane."

"Jane!" ſays my wife, in a tranſport of joy, "oh how happy I am to ſee you," letting fall the candle, and claſping me in her arms. "Oh, our dear ſon's nurſe, indeed it "is, we have found him now; we ſhall "know where he is."

After letting her give way to her joy for a minute or two, for I am ſure ſhe had forgot the poor woman who had occaſioned it, was almoſt drawing her laſt breath, I entreated

her not to give way to ſuch violent tranſports, as we were not ſure our ſon ſtill lived. I own I was myſelf exceſſively happy, and approached the bed, ſaying,

" My good Jane, you may expect every thing from my gratitude; you alone can give us any intelligence concerning my ſon; I hope you will do well yet, I aſſure you, you ſhall not want for advice, nor any thing elſe now."

" Oh my Lord," ſays ſhe, " you are too good, I only implore your forgiveneſs, ſenſible I don't deſerve your pity. I now feel too ſtrongly the promiſes I made, and what I promiſed to do to ſerve you and your dear baby: but I did not intend to have acted as I have done, when I made thoſe promiſes to your Lady: indeed, my Lord, 'twas fear made me act wrong, and all I can ſay or do now, won't repair my fault. I am going very faſt, indeed."

" Pray,

"Pray, my good friend," I replied, "do not fatigue yourſelf, only inform me where our ſon is, or where we can find him; and if you don't live to enjoy my bounty, your family ſhall be taken care of."

"You are too good, my Lord, far too good," ſaid the poor dying wretch; "I cannot juſtly tell you what you wiſh to know; but believe your ſon ſtill lives, but I don't know for certain. I am a poor wicked ſinner, and going to leave this world, and can only give you ſome little account of your child, that may enable you to reclaim him, perhaps."

We both ſet down by the bed, all impatience for her narrative, our fears having returned, from what ſhe had ſaid. Having made her take a few drops in water, ſhe began as follows.

"I always refuſed to tell your Ladyſhip, during your confinement, how I became con-

cerned in the buſineſs from the firſt. I am a Midwife by profeſſion, and it was Monſieur La Fleur, the late Preſident's valet, who engaged me, after telling me a very different ſtory concerning your Ladyſhip, to the one you told me during your impriſonment. Well, but as ſoon as you was gone, my Lady, with thoſe two men who fetched you away all in ſuch a hurry, Monſieur La Fleur came in to me; he had ſtaid to ſee your Ladyſhip ſet off; he then told me, that he was come to take me and the children back to Paris; ſo as ſoon as I was ready, we ſet off in a coach that had brought him. During our journey, he aſked me if I knew who your Ladyſhip was. I told him I did, and that I thought you had been treated very cruelly, and that he had deceived me when he engaged me, but he perſiſted in it, that it was your Ladyſhip who had impoſed upon me, aſſuring me, the Preſident had been obliged to act as he had done, for the honour of his family; but I have not ſtrength to repeat to your Ladyſhip all the wicked lies he told me; I will

come

come to the more important part of my ſtory.

" About a league on this ſide Paris, we met the Preſident, as I had been told we ſhould; he was on horſeback, and all alone, ſo he alighted, and got into the coach to me, and Monſieur La Fleur mounted his horſe, ſo he began to aſk me what I knew about the matter; told me I had been impoſed upon, and that I muſt now expoſe the little baſtard, as he called the dear child, by which means it would go to the Foundling Hoſpital. I made ſome objections, and ſaid I would bring it up, if he would allow me, with my ſon; but he flew into a moſt violent paſſion, and ſaid he would be obeyed, bidding me reflect what the conſequences would be, if I incurred his diſpleaſure, aſſuring me, at the ſame time, if I did as he deſired, I ſhould always find a friend and protector in him.

" He got out of the carriage juſt before we arrived at Paris, after making me a very

handſome preſent, and mounted his horſe again. The moment we got upon the ſtones, La Fleur put me, and the two children, into a hackney coach, with our baggage, and ordered the man to drive to my lodgings; he then took leave of me, and ſet off in the other carriage.

"When I arrived at home, I was very much puzzled how to act, however, my fears for my own ſafety, induced me to act contrary to my inclinations; but my love for the dear little boy, made me imagine a ſtratagem, to prevent his being ſent to the Foundling Hoſpital, and to engage thoſe who might find him, to take care of him.

"I dreſſed him in a white robe which I made out of the muſlin gown you left behind you, my Lady, and trimmed it all with lace, as well as I could; I then put all the little trinkets which I found in your pockets, about his neck; there was your wedding ring, which I found in your purſe, a diamond croſs, and

and an oval locket, for I was determined he ſhould have all you left, except your money, and my laſt precaution was, to write your maiden name, and the Preſident's, who was then Count de St. Blancard, upon a card, which I cut in half, ſo that it was impoſſible for any body to read what was wrote, if the two pieces were not joined. I had known of ſuch things being done, in ſimilar caſes; well, I pinned the half of this card upon his boſom; I then wrote a note, addreſſed to whoever found him, in which I deſired the ſweet fellow might be taken particular care of, adding, he belonged to a nobleman, who would one day well reward them for their trouble, when the reaſons ceaſed, which obliged him to expoſe him in that manner; and that you might be able to know him to a certainty, ſir, (for I never intended to carry my ſecret to the grave) and that he ſhould ſtill have ſomething more to make thoſe he might fall into the hands of, take notice of him, I painted upon his left arm, with a compoſition they mark all the children with at the Foundling

Hoſpital, which I happened to be acquainted with, a heart, and the two firſt letters of your names, one on each ſide, and if he is alive, he ſtill bears that mark, for it can never be effaced.

" Thus having got every thing ready, I ſet out the third day after my return, with tears in my eyes, and a very heavy heart, with the dear little fellow, in a baſket, which I had bought for the purpoſe, in which I laid him, upon a pillow, which I had alſo trimmed with lace; likewiſe put your watch and chain, which you had left at your bedſide, in your hurry, and the pocket-book you ſo ſtrenuouſly recommended me to give to the Preſident, not daring to deliver it, now you told me it opened with a ſecret which was only known to your two ſelves, ſo I was not afraid of any bodies reading what it contained.

" From L'Iſle Notre Dame, where I lived, I brought him into the Rue St. Honore, without being able to determine where I ſhould

ſhould leave him: ſometimes I thought of ſetting him down at the gates of ſome of the great hotels; but in paſſing Le Cul de Sac de L'Vratirre, which carriages never go down, I thought it would be ſafer for the child, as well as myſelf, to leave him there, than in a more frequented place; I therefore advanced a few ſteps down the lane, and without reflection, I fixed my hand upon the firſt knocker I came to, meaning to give a very loud rap, and then run away, before any body came; but while I was holding the knocker in my hand, and trembling like an aſpen leaf, a carriage ſtopped at the end of the lane, in the Rue St. Honore, ſo I let the knocker down again very ſoftly, for I was ſo frightened I hardly knew what I did, ſo ſetting my baſket down upon the ſteps of the door where I was going to knock, I ran away as faſt as I could, and was very near being under the carriage wheels, in my confuſion; happy, however, I was, when I found I was ſafe, and had executed my cruel commiſſion, not doubting but the people

who got out of the coach, would find the baſket.

" I ran all the way home, for fear of being ſtopped, and the next day I waited upon the Preſident, and told him I had expoſed the child, without mentioning any of the precautions I had taken concerning it. He was very much pleaſed, and made me another preſent before he diſmiſſed me.

" I was, however, ſtill very uneaſy about the ſweet baby, and wiſhed to find out, if poſſible, what was become of him, I therefore went, about three days afterwards, into the bye lane where I had left him, and walked into a ſhop directly oppoſite the door I intended to have knocked at, under pretence of buying ſomething; there was only a woman in the ſhop, who ſold boxes and toys; I aſked her ſeveral queſtions about her goods, and then begged to know, if it was true that there had been a gentleman aſſaſſinated in that very lane a few evenings before, about nine

nine o'clock; I had been told ſo, and that the villains had been taken up.

She ſaid it muſt be a ſtory, for ſhe had not even heard it mentioned, and ſhe, or her huſband, muſt have known if any ſuch thing had happened, becauſe of the buſtle ſuch affairs generally occaſion.

"I ſaid I ſuppoſed I had been miſ-informed, or had miſtaken the place; and finding ſhe did not mention a child having been found, which was what I expected, I changed the diſcourſe to the neighbourhood, and after ſeveral circumlocutions, I ventured to aſk her who lived oppoſite to her.

"Mr. Rhubarbin, an apothecary," ſhe ſaid, "whoſe ſhop made the corner of the Rue St. Honore; the great door of his houſe is through his ſhop; this is only his private door: well, God knows, I wiſh I had his money, I would not ſell toys, for he is as rich as Creoſus, and has but one child in the world."

"Finding

" Finding I could not gain any intelligence concerning my baſket, I took my leave.

" I now walked in the Rue St. Honore, and after paſſing the ſhop two or three times, I ventured in; there were only ſome ſhop men, who were making up medicines, but one ſeemed above the reſt, as he was giving them orders. I addreſſed myſelf to him, having thought of an excuſe before I entered.

" I aſked him if he could help me to a wet nurſe's place, having heard Mr. Rhubarbin often had it in his power to ſerve people in my line, through his extenſive buſineſs.

" He ſaid, very gruffly, he did not know any body juſt then in want of me."

" I ſaid I was very ſorry, as I had only laid in four months, and I flattered myſelf I ſhould

ſhould have given ſatisfaction, if he could have recommended me to any body.

"If you had preſented yourſelf three days ago, you might have been employed in our houſe, perhaps, but my maſter is provided now."

"Finding I could not get much out of this man, I aſked him if I could ſpeak to his miſtreſs; perhaps ſhe might not like the nurſe ſhe had got, and I could undertake a cook's place, beſides nurſing her child, and have an excellent character from the lady I laſt lived with."

"Aye, very likely," ſays he, "but my miſtreſs has not ſpoke to any body theſe three months, or more."

"No, the Lord be praiſed," ſaid another of the men, "the birth of her ſon ſent her to her laſt home."

"I laughed,

"I laughed, and aſked him how many children ſhe had left behind her."

"Why gueſs," ſays the ſurly one, "ſhe had only been married eleven months."

"Devil take me," ſaid the other, "if I don't think this woman wants to marry our maſter, after all."

"If that is what you are come about," ſays ſurly, laughing, "why ſpeak to him, he is the moſt proper perſon to give you an anſwer."

"While he was talking, Mr. Rhubarbin came into the ſhop; I made him much the ſame queſtions I had his man, and received ſtill ſhorter anſwers, ſo I was obliged to leave the ſhop, without learning any think about your ſweet child, my lady; but I did not reſt ſatisfied, for I tried every means in my power to diſcover whether the child was really in the houſe; a wet nurſe having been wanted three

three days before, gave me great hopes it was for your ſon, as the time tallied exactly, and being pretty well convinced he had been taken in by Mr. Rhubarbin, as had he ſent for the Commiſſary of the quarter, or ſent it to the Foundling Hoſpital, the ſtory would have been known in the neighbourhood, and I was ſoon convinced that the adventure had not got wind.

" I paſſed the ſhop fifty times of an evening, for near a month together, to try if I could ſee the child, but I never ſet eyes upon him once, and this is all the information I can give your Lordſhip, for I left Paris ſoon afterwards, and I never heard of the late Preſident's death, 'till mere accident diſcovered it to me about a month ago.

" I returned to Paris a very little time before, in hopes of getting employment in my way of life, not finding a provincial town anſwer, ſo my Lord one day (the very day I fell

fell ill) as I was croſſing the Quai de la Vallée, I ſaw a ſervant in your livery, go into a ſhop, ſo I turned about and followed him in; he was chuſing ſome canary birds, which he ſaid he wanted for Madame La Preſidente de Ranſal. I then thought I might venture to aſk whether this lady was the wife of the father or ſon, for being much diſtreſſed, I intended to have applied to my former protector, and I then learnt, your father had been dead going on of ſeventeen years, and that you was now, and had been, from his death, Preſident de Ranſal. I was greatly affected by this news, but concealing my emotion as well as I was able, I aſked the man if Madame La Preſident's maiden name was not d'Orville. He ſaid he had heard ſo, and by the direction he gave, I found your Lordſhip occupied your late father's hotel, ſo I determined to wait upon you the next day, but I fell ill that very night, and I have been getting worſe and worſe ever ſince; ſo finding myſelf ſo near my latter end, I took the liberty of ſending to your Lordſhip, to give

you

you all the information in my power reſpecting your dear child, whom I was, ſo much againſt my will, forced to abandon."

She then gave us a piece of muſlin, like the robe ſhe had made for our ſon, and a piece of lace, ſimilar to what it was trimmed with, and the other half of the card which ſhe had wrote, and had always taken particular care of, without knowing whether they would be of any uſe, after ſo many years. This recital had fatigued her exceſſively, ſo we took our leave, after having made her and her friend a preſent for the trouble they had given themſelves, though we both ſincerely wiſhed Jane had kept her promiſes rather better.

## CHAP. VI.

WE now began to reflect how we muſt act reſpecting Mr. Rhubarbin, and commended his conduct very much, not doubting but he thought the ſecreſy which he had obſerved concerning the child, would be greatly approved of by the nobleman to whom it belonged, and we intended to reward him accordingly; it was too late that night to think of ſending for him, but early the next morning I ſent my coach for him, and an entreaty that

that he would wait upon us immediately. He ſoon arrived, and was ſhewn into my ſtudy, as I had deſired, where I inſtantly informed him why I had ſent for him, and aſſured him of my eternal gratitude, without paying any attention to the ſilence he obſerved, for he ſat all the time I was talking to him, in a profound reverie. I told him how I had diſcovered that my ſon had fallen under his care; ſhewed him the muſlin, lace, and card, and repeated to him all the trinkets which were about the child, or put into the baſket with him. He ſtill remained motionleſs, and I was obliged to entreat him to ſpeak; at laſt, with all the indifference he could aſſume, he ſaid,

"He could not comprehend a ſingle word I had been ſaying; he had never had but one child in his houſe, which was his own ſon, and he could not underſtand what I meant, by ſaying he had found another, which he declared he never had."

This

This anſwer, ſo different from what I expected, ſtaggered me very much; however, I was by no means ſatisfied, I therefore inſiſted upon his having found my ſon, citing the day and hour when he was expoſed, mentioning a carriage having ſtopped, and the woman having been almoſt under the wheels in her fright. Still he only ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and ſhook his head, as if unable to comprehend me, or, at all events, to ſatisfy me.

It now ſtruck me, that avarice, perhaps, had induced him to ſend the child to the Foundling Hoſpital, that he might appropriate the trinkets which were about him, to his own uſe. I dared not mention my thoughts openly, I therefore only entreated he would not keep me in ſuſpenſe; if you have ſent him to the Foundling Hoſpital, my dear Rhubarbin, only ſay ſo, I ſhall not be the leſs obliged to you, as I have no doubt but from the marks he bore about him, and other particulars you may be able to give me,

I may

I may diſcover him, wherever he is now, or in whatever ſituation. But all my entreaties, promiſes and prayers, were uſeleſs; I could perceive a ſort of embarraſſment in the traitor, which augmented every moment, ſtill he perſiſted in declaring he was ignorant of the whole tranſaction. His obſtinacy made me almoſt raving mad, and my wife, who had been preſent during our converſation, was now bathed in tears at this unexpected failure of all the great hopes ſhe had entertained; and at laſt, finding all my entreaties, nay, ſupplications, were vain, ſhe flung herſelf at the apothecary's feet, entreating him to ſatisfy her concerning her ſon's deſtiny, if it was in his power, as ſhe really thought it was; however, far from ſucceeding, ſhe only increaſed his confuſion by her prayers, without obtaining any ſatisfactory anſwer from him. He looked at her, and ſeemed to pity her, I thought, when ſhe only entreated him to inform her where her ſon was, and to aſk any recompenſe for the intelligence it was in her power to make him; but notwithſtanding the emotion

emotion the barbarian was evidently in, he refuſed to comply with her entreaties.

Having, by this time, loſt all patience, I joined menaces to my ſupplications, capable of frightening any body but the hardened wretch we had to deal with, who ſtill perſiſted in ſaying, he really did not know what we meant. Had it not been for the embarraſſment and confuſion with which he denied the charge, I ſhould have been tempted to have believed him, notwithſtanding what Jane had ſaid; but his anxiety and heſitation convinced me he knew more about my ſon than he choſe to acknowledge; I was therefore exceſſively at a loſs to gueſs from whence his obſtinacy aroſe, as he was certain of being amply rewarded for all the trouble and pains he might have taken. A thought at laſt ſtruck me, which originated in his profeſſion, I really began to fancy he had murdered our child, to conceal his having found it, or for the ſake of making experiments upon the body of the innocent creature, and I could not

not help telling him my ſuſpicions; but inſtead of appearing frightened, he recovered himſelf greatly upon this accuſation, and addreſſing me, ſaid,

"I am known, my Lord, in my profeſſion, for a man of honour, and am, thank God, incapable of the horrid action you lay to my charge; had you ſaid as much before witneſſes, notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of your rank, I might make you repent having dared to accuſe me thus ſcandalouſly: however, my reputation is too well eſtabliſhed to be hurt by ſuch an unlikely ſtory, ſhould you chuſe to propagate your baſe notions; I therefore merely wiſh to juſtify myſelf of ſuch an action for your ſatisfaction. I have now in my ſhop a journeyman, who lived there before I became maſter of it, therefore, as I could not have killed your child, nor any other, without his knowledge, had it been for the purpoſe of making experiments, as you are pleaſed to obſerve, having no private labaratory, or any room in my houſe, into which he has not as

free acceſs as I have, therefore pray ſend for him before I quit your preſence, or any other ſervant of mine, and queſtion them yourſelf, either before me, or not, as you think beſt; but La Vallette, the man I firſt mentioned, was with me when Dubois was born, and is the moſt likely to ſatisfy you, as he boards and ſleeps in the houſe, and always has done, and he will be able to convince you, I hope, that there never has been any other child under my protection, but my own; and had I found your ſon at my door, and had either brought him in to murder him, as you are pleaſed to imagine, or had ſent him to the Foundling Hoſpital, ſome of my ſervants, or neighbours, muſt have been privy to the tranſaction."

Unwilling to let any opportunity eſcape, of ſatisfying myſelf, I left the room, and ſent a ſervant for this La Vallette, determined to ſee him before his maſter could give him his leſſon. The man ſoon obeyed my ſummons, and I queſtioned him apart; he protested he had

had never ſeen any other child in the houſe but Dubois, his maſter's ſon, who was almoſt born in his arms, and had been ſuckled at home, by a woman he had long been acquainted with; in ſhort, this man ſpoke with ſuch an air of ſincerity, and aſſured me ſo poſitively he had never heard of a child being found in the lane his maſter's private door led into, I hardly knew what to think. Still I could not acquit Rhubarbin, and I thought he might, very poſſibly, for all what he had ſaid, have found and killed my child, unknown to any of his ſervants, as a woman upon her death-bed could not have ſent for me in ſuch haſte, merely to have impoſed upon me, having learnt that morning, that Jane had expired ſoon after we had left her.

I remained ſome time in this uneaſy ſituation, when one day La Vallette (whom I had deſired the firſt time I ſaw him, to wait upon me whenever he could pick up any intelligence for me) came and told me Dubois had juſt returned to Paris, but his father had ſent

him off again, in a great hurry, to Italy, to the aſtoniſhment of every one, and that he now really believed Mr. Rhubarbin and his ſon knew ſomething about mine, as his maſter had been very thoughtful ever ſince he had ſeen me.

This intelligence only confirmed my ſuſpicions, without affording me any greater inſight into the infamous tranſaction. Beſides, I thought the great promiſes I had made the fellow, might have induced him to exaggerate his maſter's anxiety. However, from that time to the preſent moment, I may ſafely ſay, neither my wife nor myſelf, have enjoyed a ſingle hour's true felicity.

I think, therefore, you are now convinced, ſir, I ſhall not be more inclined than you are, to clemency, in the preſent caſe; depend upon it I will ſee juſtice done you with the utmoſt ſeverity, more than that you cannot expect me to promiſe, for much as I abhor Rhubarbin, I muſt acknowledge it goes ſo much

much againſt my inclination to condemn a criminal, that I almoſt wiſh his ſon may prove innocent; but by your account, that ſeems next to an impoſſibility. However, that the buſineſs may be ſoon over, I will go to Paris to-morrow morning with you, for you muſt take up your abode with us to night.

Mr. De Ceare, who had been all attention to a ſtory which ſeemed ſo well calculated to ſerve his purpoſe, thanked the Preſident very much, for the intereſting narrative he had favoured him with, and accepted the invitation. They agreed not to mention the buſineſs which had brought him thither, before Madame La Preſidente, as it could only renew her ſorrows.

## CHAP. VII.

DURING this time, the unfortunate Dubois was confined in a diſmal dungeon, his food only bread and water, and his bed a handful of rotten ſtraw, ſtill he felt no ſort of apprehenſion, conſcious he had acted right; he only prayed for his firſt examination, certain that he ſhould be honourably acquitted, as ſoon as he had explained himſelf. He therefore learned the news of its going to take place with the greateſt joy, which increaſed, when he heard the firſt Preſident du Parlament

ment was to be his judge, whoſe known good character was the univerſal theme.

He appeared in conſequence before him, with all the reſolution and confidence that innocence alone is capable of inſpiring, though the auſtere looks of the Preſident, whom he had heard ſo renowned for his humanity, rather aſtoniſhed him. But how much was his ſurpriſe augmented, when he was informed of the charge brought againſt him, and to diſcover in the firſt witneſs who appeared to ſupport it, the perfidious Champagne, who poſitively ſwore he had been wounded by him, after he had killed the poſtillion, becauſe they had both oppoſed his deſign of running away with Mademoiſelle de Ceare. He next ſwore, that his elopement with this young lady was premeditated, and that inſtead of going upon his travels, as he had made Mr. de Ceare believe he did, ſoon after they left St. * * *, he had remained concealed at Paris, and uſed to viſit Mademoiſelle de Ceare almoſt every evening; that he had often

watched them, nay, had once ſurpriſed him in her room, and that he had threatened then to kill him, if he ever mentioned a word of the matter to any body.

This depoſition ſeemed ſo unlikely, that it aſtoniſhed the Preſident, prejudiced as he was, and Dubois had an air of innocence, which had ſtruck him the moment he entered, and he now remarked the ſurpriſe with which he heard Champagne's accuſation, and the contempt he ſhewed for the villain, while he was delivering it. The Preſident therefore began to think Champagne had only turned evidence to ſave himſelf; however, he kept his thoughts to himſelf, and addreſſing the priſoner in a tone as ſevere as his aſpect, he deſired he would defend himſelf, if he had any thing to alledge in extenuation of the crimes he ſtood accuſed of.

Dubois anſwered his judge in the moſt manly, reſpectful manner, ſaying, not to take up too much of his Lordſhip's time, he would aſſure

aſſure him there was not a word of truth in what Champagne had ſaid, and he hoped to be able to prove his innocence, to his Lordſhip's ſatisfaction. In the firſt place, it would be very eaſy for him to prove he had ſpent the two laſt years at Padua; ſome part of the time he had ſpent in the Marquis d'Elcour's company; but he could produce many proofs of his reſidence in Italy, if required.

"That may be," ſays the Preſident, without ſeeming at all ſoftened, though he really was very much ſo; "but how came Mademoiſelle de Ceare's picture in your poſſeſſion, unknown to both that young lady and her father?"

Dubois's plea was now a very weak one, "only that of gallantry," hardly allowable in anſwer to ſo ſerious a charge.

The Preſident next aſked him, "how, and by what unforeſeen accident, he had been brought ſo appropos to Mademoiſelle de

Ceare's aſſiſtance, ſo far from the high road,. mentioning the ſtory ſhe had told, which he had learnt from her father.

Dubois alledged the real truth, his having loſt himſelf; he then related all the particulars of his meeting with that young lady, declaring he only meant to have conducted her in ſafety to her aunt's, under whoſe protection ſhe meant to have put herſelf, adding, the archers had ſeized them within a few miles of the convent, where he alſo intended to have preferred his complaint againſt Champagne.

" All this may be true," ſays the Preſident, involuntarily relaxing into his uſual benevolence.

When Mr. de Ceare exclaimed, " they might as well be going to Italy, as to this convent, and after all I have already told your Lordſhip of their mutual love, which I remarked ſo long before this affair, I hope you will not liſten to ſo poor a plea; he inveigled

veigled my daughter from my houſe, excited her to rob me, and certainly, even by his own account, either he or his ſervant, murdered the poſtillion, and wounded this honeſt fellow," meaning Champagne.

"You are the accuſer, not the judge, I think," ſays the Preſident, addreſſing Mr. de Ceare, in a low voice.

This trifling incident convinced Dubois, the Preſident was very ſtrongly prejudiced againſt him, not having heard what he ſaid to Mr. de Ceare, he thought he was only promiſing him juſtice at his expence, as the judge inſtantly turned to the priſoner, having reſumed his ſevere aſpect, ſaying,

"He ſhould poſtpone his trial for a few days, to allow him time to prove his innocence, if poſſible."

The Preſident, who began to be very much of opinion he was accuſed unjuſtly, only acted

thus, in hopes that Rhubarbin's fears for his ſon's life, would induce him to diſcover what he had done with his child: at all events, he determined only to condemn Dubois upon the ſtrongeſt evidence, he therefore intended to hear what Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſaid about the adventure, before he went any farther; at the ſame time, let the matter turn out which way it might, he wiſhed to frighten both Rhubarbin and his ſon; to accompliſh which, he aſſumed an air of the utmoſt ſeverity, which rejoiced Mr de Ceare, who began to fear the young Phyſician would be acquitted, and ordered Dubois back to his priſon, and for conſolation, allowing him to let his father know where he was, and what he was accuſed of; and this indulgence the Preſident merely granted him, to ſerve his own purpoſes.

Dubois, more and more aſtoniſhed at the rigorous treatment he met with from a judge, renowned for his clemency and integrity, returned to his dungeon, where he entreated the

the favour of pen, ink and paper, to write to his father; this the gaoler obſtinately refuſed him, promiſing, however, to carry a verbal meſſage to the Apothecary, ſince the Preſident allowed it.

Dubois therefore deſired he would entreat his father to come and ſee him immediately.

"That," ſaid the gaoler, "would not be permitted, where Mr. Rhubarbin ſo inclined, but he might ſee him as he went to the Place de Greve, where he would be executed, ſo he would not die without that conſolation."

This idea quite overcame Dubois; the notion of his father's being for ever diſhonoured, and of ſuffering the worſt, as well as the moſt ignominious of all deaths, added to the cruel treatment he met with, quite plunged him into deſpair; and this anxiety of mind, added to his miſerable lodgings, and want of air, brought on a violent fever, which increaſed conſiderably that night. The gaoler, there-

fore, who had not yet acquitted himſelf of the commiſſion Dubois had given him, went firſt to the Preſident's, to acquaint him with his priſoner's ſituation. The Preſident, after blaming this unfeeling wretch for the delay, deſired him to go inſtantly to Mr. Rhubarbin, bidding him frighten him as much as he poſſibly could, by exaggerating his ſon's danger, and not to omit informing him, who was the young man's judge, thinking that would alarm the apothecary more than any thing.

The gaoler inſtantly obeyed the Preſident's orders. Rhubarbin was exceſſively ſurpriſed when he learned where his ſon was; from what the gaoler told him, he did not know how to act. Theſe kind of trials were not publick in France; he entreated this kind ſoul to conduct him to his unfortunate ſon; this the man poſitively refuſed, by the joint orders of both the Preſident and Mr. de Ceare, only telling him, in general terms, what his ſon was accuſed of, adding, he would certainly be broke upon the wheel, if he lived to be carried

carried to the Place de Greve; but if he wanted to know more of the matter, he muſt go to the Preſident's ſecretary, who perhaps might, if he bribed him pretty high, ſhew him a copy of the indictment.

He now left him, and Rhubarbin, without believing his ſon was culpable, was exceſſively alarmed for his ſafety. He inſtantly waited upon the Preſident, but could only ſee the Secretary, from whom he learnt, after ſeveral unſucceſsful viſits to the Judge, that his ſon would be finally tried the next day, becauſe Mr. de Ceare having learned he was dangerouſly ill, preſſed the affair; therefore, according to all appearance, ſays the Secretary, who was pre-inſtructed by his Lord, your ſon will be condemned to-morrow, and executed the day after.

This was a thunderſtroke to the Apothecary, who firmly believed what he had heard. He returned home in the greateſt agitation of mind, paſſed the night without going to bed,

bed, and the next morning, knowing the Preſident was an early riſer, he was at the gate of his hotel by day break, where he remained 'till they opened.

The porter aſked him what he wanted ſo early; he told him he knew the Preſident was going to the Palace, and he muſt ſee him before he went. The porter had received orders not to admit any body, as the Preſident meant to ſet out as ſoon as he had breakfaſted, ſo that all Mr. Rhubarbin could obtain of him, was, the permiſſion of remaining in the court 'till the Preſident came out to get into his carriage.

The time ſoon arrived, the carriage was at the door waiting, and the Preſident appeared upon the ſteps. Rhubarbin inſtantly flung himſelf at his feet;

"Liſten to me, ſir," ſaid he, "for one moment, if you with to ſave yourſelf from eternal remorſe."

The

The Preſident, who hoped the Apothecary would now declare all he knew concerning his ſon, wiſhing to alarm him ſtill more, told him he was in haſte, and deſired he would leave him: if you have any thing to ſay in favour of your ſon, reſerve it 'till we meet at the palace; I will do him juſtice you may reſt aſſured."

Saying this, he ſlipped by the Apothecary, and inſtantly got into his coach; but Rhubarbin, who was now like one diſtracted, called out,

"Stop, for heaven's ſake, ſtop, and hear me one word—only one word, and then I will abandon all to the direction of Providence."

"Tell me then, this moment, all you know about my ſon," ſaid the Judge, in an awful accent, "if you wiſh to ſave your own."

The

The Apothecary was ſo agitated, he hardly knew what he ſaid himſelf, nor could he comprehend what the Preſident ſaid to him, he only ſtood motionleſs, almoſt unable to ſpeak. The Preſident deſired the footmen, who were ſtanding at the coach door, to bid the coachman go on, thinking the fear of loſing ſight of him, would certainly make Rhubarbin ſpeak.

The Apothecary, rouſed from his ſtupefaction by theſe orders, again called out,

"Stop—ſtop!" catching hold of the coach door, the glaſs being down; but the coach went on, and was driving out of the court; not being able to keep his hold at the gate, he let go, ſaying, in a loud voice, "go, then, unnatural father, and condemn thine own ſon: Dubois is not mine, 'tis your ſon will periſh, by your unjuſt decree."

The Preſident, almoſt as much agitated as the Apothecary, upon hearing this, inſtantly checked

checked the coachman, and ordered him to turn round into the court again; but the ſtreet being rather too narrow to turn inſtantly, the Preſident's impatience would not let him wait, but opening the coach door himſelf, he jumped out, and ran into the court again, where juſt within the gate he perceived Rhubarbin, who had not obſerved the carriage ſtop, ſtanding as pale as death, and muſt have fallen all his length upon the pavement, if the Preſident had not inſtantly ordered his ſervants to carry him directly into his ſtudy, whither he followed him, in the greateſt emotion, and could hardly contain himſelf 'till they were alone.

The ſervants placed the Apothecary upon the ſofa, and left the room. During this time the Preſident rather recovered his uſual temper, and was leſs violent than he moſt likely would have been, if he had not ſeen the Apothecary more dead than alive, and leaning his head againſt the ſide of the ſofa he was ſitting upon. The Preſident took a turn in the

the room before he ſpoke, and determined not to let his humanity get the better of him, 'till he was farther convinced of the truth of what he had heard, which he had great doubts of, when he came to reflect upon it.

As ſoon as he thought Rhubarbin was able to ſpeak, "Well," ſaid he, "what did you tell me juſt now: if you deceive me, Rhubarbin, neither you nor your ſon ſhall eſcape my revenge; my feelings are not to be trifled with; prove the truth of what you have advanced, inſtantly, or ——"

Here the Preſident pauſed, trembling with anxiety, and ſtood looking at Rhubarbin, waiting his anſwer.

The poor Apothecary looked at him in his turn, and made ſeveral efforts to ſpeak, at laſt, in a very weak faint voice, ſaid,

"I have not deceived you, my conſcience is clear, and you muſt do as you pleaſe, now, either

either condemn or ſave your ſon, who is as dear to me, as he ever can be to you."

The Preſident wanted to hear the matter more explained, he therefore only ſtood looking at him, and the Apothecary having gained a little more breath, ſaid,

"You may believe me, my Lord, Dubois is your own fleſh and blood; he is not my ſon, that is all I can ſay now," making an effort to get up; in a few hours I may be able to enter into particulars; I muſt leave you for the preſent."

The Preſident now compleatly ſoftened, could not reſtrain his tears any longer.

"Do not abandon me now, Mr. Rhubarbin," taking him in his arms, "perhaps we may both have acted wrong, through excellent motives. I always thought you could have ſatisfied me, as it ſeems you could, but you had certainly weighty reaſons for acting

as

as you have done; you have brought my child up, and you could not part with him; it only convinces me of the goodneſs of your heart, ſo forgive me what I have made you ſuffer, as I ſincerely do you, let your motives have been what they may; and believe me, if you had not made this important diſcovery, and prejudiced as I certainly was againſt you and your ſon, I ſtill meant to have ſhewn him all the lenity in my power, and I may ſay, I ſet out for the palace, firmly perſuaded he would be honourably acquitted, upon the evidence of Mademoiſelle de Ceare, who would have been examined by my deſire."

Rhubarbin, who was not quite revived, was almoſt angry with himſelf, for having diſcloſed his ſecret, after hearing what the Preſident ſaid, but he could no longer conceal it, he therefore ſat down again, and accepted a glaſs of wine the Preſident offered him: he was really in want of ſomething, for he had hardly eat or drank for the laſt two days, always dreading he ſhould hear of this young man's

man's being condemned by his own father; his love for him, therefore, made him diſcloſe a ſecret, he had a very great intereſt in concealing, for he was firmly convinced, Dubois would have periſhed if he had not revealed it. The Preſident ſeeing him tolerably recovered, entreated him to explain the matter rather more clearly to him.

"I will ſatisfy you in every particular, my Lord, I have kept all the clothes, jewels, &c. that were about the child, and I will return them all to you."

"As you found my ſon, they muſt be in your hands," ſays the Preſident, "but how are theſe to convince me that this Dubois, who now ſtands indicted for ſuch heinous crimes, (though I firmly believe him innocent) is the child you found, and of courſe my ſon?"

"The heart, and the letters which are upon his left arm, my Lord, and which you may

may remember mentioning to me, may ſerve to convince your Lordſhip."

"That proof is equivocal," ſaid the Preſident, the mark is artificial, and you may have put a ſimilar one upon your ſon, for any thing I can know to the contrary, in hopes the child you found, might be reclaimed by people of ſufficient rank and fortune, to have tempted you to have parted with him."

"Had that been my plan, my Lord, I ſhould have given him up two years ago, when you firſt demanded him of me, and could not have entertained the doubts concerning him, you now ſeem to do; but my honour, my fortune, and my reputation, depended upon your ſon being thought mine; he replaced one I had loſt; if you did but know what the diſcovery of my ſecret is likely to coſt me, you would no longer ſuppoſe I either meant to deceive, or to impoſe my own child upon you. My love for your ſon, and the fear I was in for his life, alone induced me

me to reveal what I meant to have carried to my grave with me."

"But all this reaſoning is not convincing," ſaid the Preſident, "what is become of your ſon, whom you ſay mine replaces?"

"To baniſh all your doubts and ſcruples, my Lord, I can very eaſily prove, to your ſatisfaction, that he no longer exiſts; when you are convinced of his death, I think you muſt believe what I have told you, ſince I once more declare, that I loſe both my reputation and my fortune, in acknowledging that Dubois is your ſon, for I loſt mine the very day I found your's, and he was buried only four leagues from Paris; all this I can convince your Lordſhip of."

"Was your ſon in Paris when he died?" ſaid the Preſident.

"No, my Lord, he died where he was buried, and before I ever ſaw your ſon."

'Tis very extraordinary," ſaid the Preſident, "your ſon ſhould die ſo apropos upon that very day, though I cannot doubt your word; but ſtill I wiſh to be further ſatisfied."

"I have not every neceſſary proof about me, my Lord, to convince you of the truth of what you have advanced, but I will forfeit my life if I don't clear the matter up wholly to your ſatisfaction, and convince you fully, that Dubois is really your child."

The Preſident no longer retained a doubt, he went out to deſire his lady would join them, and to ſend word to the palace, the trial muſt be put of, on account of ſome proofs of the young man's reſidence in Italy, which were not yet arrived. He met one of her footmen near the ſtudy door, and ſent him to inform his miſtreſs, he wanted her immediately, while he ſent his Secretary to the palace.

Madame

Madame La Preſidente ſoon obeyed the ſummons, and having heard Rhubarbin was with her huſband, ſhe was in hopes ſhe ſhould at laſt learn ſome ſatisfactory account of her dear ſon; though thus prepared for ſome agreeable intelligence, ſhe was very near fainting with joy, when the Preſident communicated to her what the ſorrowful Rhubarbin had juſt declared to him, but her felicity was very much damped, when ſhe learned that this dear child, who had coſt her ſo many tears, even before he was born, was this very Dubois, accuſed of the greateſt crimes, and now dangerouſly ill in a dungeon, locked down with heavy irons, and perhaps dying, her firſt wiſh, without waiting to learn the circumſtances likely to conſtitute this important truth, was to have him releaſed from his horrid priſon. She burſt into tears, and addreſſing the Preſident, ſaid,

" Can you know that your ſon, whom you ſo long wiſhed to ſee, is in ſo terrible a ſituation,

tion, without endeavouring to ſhorten his miſery? he may be dying for want of proper care, while we are talking about him."

The Preſident, whoſe love for this ſon, though he had never ſeen him but as a criminal, was as great as his wife's could be, and who felt the ſame impatience ſhe did, was not like her, ignorant of the formalities requiſite to be obſerved, even before he could ſoften his priſon; he knew too well the crimes he ſtood accuſed of, and knew what ſteps it would be neceſſary to take; but before he could be removed, he muſt get at the bottom of this odd buſineſs; he therefore told his wife the neceſſity there was for this delay, which hurt him as much as it could her. He then turned to the Apothecary, who was ſtill ſeated upon the ſofa, and now ſeemed a prey to the deepeſt ſorrow.

"Now, Mr. Rhubarbin, tell us what exceſs, or what refinement of cruelty, has engaged

gaged you thus, to prolong our anxiety and poignant diſtreſs, and why you are now ſo afflicted, at having removed the cauſe of it, and thoſe cruel ſuſpicions your myſterious air, and evident confuſion gave us, when we laſt met."

"When we are innocent of an accuſation, my Lord, we hardly feel it, and I did not with to juſtify myſelf of having occaſioned the death of your ſon, at the expence of a ſecret ſo important as mine was, though in ſome reſpect I deſerve your reproaches, yet I have a ſort of juſtification in my own eyes, for what I have done. I thought the fortune he would neceſſarily enjoy, would in ſome reſpects make him amends for the deceit I practiſed, in concealing from him the rank he was born to enjoy, which he could not repine at, as he always thought himſelf my ſon, and does to this moment. I am ſure I loved him better than ever I ſhould have done a child of my own, and I proteſt I had ſuch an intereſt in

making him paſs for my ſon, that nothing leſs than the eminent danger I thought his life in, could have engaged me to have revealed this ſecret, which will coſt me my fortune and my reputation, beſides making me run the riſk of a ſhameful puniſhment, which I certainly deſerve in the eyes of the world; ſtill I cannot repent of what I have done; I even rejoice when I reflect, that this adventure has, in a manner, forced me to do this amiable young man juſtice, by reſtoring him to the rank he was born to grace. I will retire into a convent with the ſmall remains of my fortune, for I cannot hope, that an affair of this kind can be kept a ſecret, nor that to preſerve me from conſequences as diſagreeable as inevitable, your Lordſhip, nor you, my Lady, will deprive yourſelves of a ſon, who is reſtored to you by ſo ſingular an event. I will this very day return you all the trinkets which are to confirm my loſs, for I dare not hope you will ſtill conſent to let your ſon paſs for mine, though the loſs of him, oh heavens!"

vens!" ſaid Rhubarbin, claſping his hands, and looking half wild, "will be almoſt worſe than death to me."

"I certainly cannot promiſe what you ſeem to wish," ſaid the aſtoniſhed Preſident, "but you may expect every thing I can do to ſerve you: I forget, with pleaſure, all the reaſons of complaint you have given me, by your long and obſtinate ſilence; I only now reflect upon your generous behaviour towards my ſon, and the education you gave him before you knew to whom he belonged; therefore, my dear Rhubarbin," preſenting him his hand in the moſt friendly manner, "I not only ſincerely forgive you, but be aſſured, that my gratitude will be eternal, for the great care you have taken of him, therefore, for heaven's ſake, don't give way to deſpair, nor pray don't mention your fears of being in want; I owe you an immenſe ſum for the time my ſon has been under your care, that alone muſt ſecure you from want, and even

enable you to live at eaſe all the reſt of your life; but you have ſomething upon your mind, I perceive, which make you apprehenſive of ſome other misfortunes, what my ſon can have to do in that matter, I cannot gueſs, but I give you my word of honour, if you will put it in my power to ſerve you in any thing, I will undertake it with pleaſure: I have ſome power, you know, and it ſhall all be employed to preſerve you from the misfortunes you ſeem to dread; therefore, look upon me as your beſt friend, and explain yourſelf frankly; I believe you are convinced you will never have any reaſon to repent placing your confidence in me."

This obliging diſcourſe greatly calmed Rhubarbin's apprehenſions; he thanked the Preſident in the ſtrongeſt terms, for his promiſed protection, adding, emboldened by his kind offers, he would not conceal any thing from him; but to make myſelf clear, I muſt retrograde very conſiderably.

"Tell

"Tell us your whole ſtory," ſaid the Preſident, "ſhall be a better judge of every circumſtance, and can adviſe or act in conſequence."

Rhubarbin bowed, and began as follows:

## CHAP. VIII.

I Am the ſon of a Phyſician of Niſmes, in Provence, who was totally ruined by a law ſuit, the loſs of which affected him ſo much, that he died ſoon after, in the greateſt poverty. I had loſt my mother about two years before, ſo an only brother and myſelf were left, in a moſt miſerable ſituation, without either friends or relations. My brother had been brought up for the church; he was ſome years older than I was, and having been taken

taken notice of by ſome Pariſian gentlemen, who were come to Nilmes for their health, through their recommendation he obtained a ſmall living, juſt after my father's death, about four leagues from Paris.

I had been brought up to follow my father's profeſſion, but I was too young, and inexperienced, beſides being too poor, to think of continuing his buſineſs when he died. I therefore, at my brother's requeſt, accompanied him, when he went to take poſſeſſion of his living. He always behaved more like a father than a brother to me, dividing his little income with me, 'till he could provide me a place in ſome of the hoſpitals, through his generous benefactors, who recommended him, at laſt, to Mr. Rhubarbin, the Apothecary, whoſe name I bear at preſent, having inherited his wife and his ſhop. They ſaid this old gentleman might very likely be able to help me to ſomething, through the line of buſineſs he was in, we therefore came to Paris, and waited upon

him. Our viſit happened to be very apropos, for Mr. Rhubarbin was himſelf in want of a ſhopman, and from my converſation, and the profeſſion I had been brought up to, he thought I might ſuit him; he offered to take me into his houſe immediately; I accepted his propoſition, thinking I had been long enough a burthen to my worthy brother, and had the good fortune to become a favourite of my maſter's, who often made me ſmall preſents in private, not to make the other ſhopmen jealous, though he was renowned for his avarice; yet his attachment to money did not ariſe from the want of it, for he was immenſely rich, and might have retired from the fatigues of buſineſs years before. He had a wife, who was not more addicted to generoſity than himſelf, and who was much worſe tempered; the difference there was in their ages, made them deteſt each other, at leaſt, their frequent quarrels aroſe from that diſparity, for my maſter was near eighty, and my miſtreſs but juſt turned of forty; notwithſtanding Mr. Rhubarbin's age and avarice, he

he was good tempered and agreeable, but his wife was really a compleat fury, and her niggardly diſpoſition even ſurpaſſed her huſband's; nay, from what I could learn, his was greatly owing to her inſtigations; but whatever pleaſed him, was ſure to diſpleaſe her: in ſhort, through her abominable temper, we were always in want of ſhop men, ſo few would put up with her, and it was really a miracle to eat a dinner dreſſed three times by the ſame cook.

I was naturally good tempered, and could bear more than moſt of my fellow ſervants, who often retorted when ſhe was in her airs; but thinking I might be out of bread, I generally kept my thoughts to myſelf when ſhe was quarrelſome; if I could not keep out of her way, I was ſilent, ſo that in a few months, I became a favourite of my miſtreſs's, as well as my maſter's, becauſe ſhe perceived I was very attentive to their intereſt, and at laſt I became the confident of both; was often aſked into their room, when

they

they were alone, and was frequently obliged to liſten to their various complaints.

The old man complained of his wife's violent temper, and my miſtreſs often told me ſhe was ſick of the ſtupid life ſhe led with ſuch an old wretch; wondered why he lived ſo long, but he took ſuch care of himſelf; for her part ſhe could not ſee what uſe he was of in the world now, except to worry and torment her out of her life.

His infirmities often obliged him to keep his bed, when the care of the ſhop totally devolved upon me. I always waited upon him for inſtructions, when I thought it neceſſary: in ſhort, he let me into all the ſecrets of his trade, which had enabled him to accumulate ſo large a fortune, as a recompenſe for the attachment he perceived I had for him.

Having had theſe inſtructions for near ſix years, I was in a ſituation, when he died, to have

have kept a ſhop for myſelf, but I was ſtill in want of the moſt neceſſary article for ſuch an undertaking, namely, money, for the wages I received, were not more than ſufficient for my current expences, ſo being obliged to relinquiſh all ideas of becoming a maſter, I choſe to remain as head ſhop-man with Madam Rhubarbin, whoſe avarice determined her to carry on the buſineſs as before.

She was delighted when ſhe found herſelf her own miſtreſs, but her taſte for this liberty, ſhe had ſo long pined after, ſoon vaniſhed; ſhe was tired of her widowhood at the end of three months, and began to ſay what a horrid thing it was for a woman to be obliged to carry on buſineſs; ſhe could not obtain the reſpect of her ſhop-men, and was ſure the public would loſe all confidence in her ſhop, if ſhe did not marry again ſoon. Under theſe pretences, and for fear of being ruined, as ſhe was pleaſed to ſay, ſhe fixed upon me

as

as a proper perſon to ſucceed her late huſband, either through knowing I underſtood the buſineſs, or thinking my eaſy temper would let her remain perfect miſtreſs; and perhaps, rather flattered by my youth, thinking a huſband of ſeven and twenty likely to prove a more agreeable companion than one of eighty. She frequently ſent for me, to conſult me tête à tête about her buſineſs, and hardly ever ſeemed out of temper for ſome time, particularly with me, who kept the accounts, and ſhe found the profits anſwer her moſt ſanguine expectations.

I thought I perceived an agreeable change in her diſpoſition: in ſhort, ſhe ſoon gave me to underſtand her meaning, and I muſt own, I was very much flattered, for ſhe began to have ſuitors in abundance, ſome in the ſame profeſſion, knowing ſhe was exceſſively rich; but ſhe did not want for ſenſe, as ſhe ſoon told me, ſhe knew her money was her greateſt merit in moſt of their eyes, and

often

often ſaid, when we were alone, all theſe homages by no means flattered her. Still I dared not propoſe myſelf, though ſhe often ſaid ſhe ſhould chuſe a young man when ſhe married again, a ſober ſteady perſon, capable of ſeeing juſtice done her in her line of buſineſs; at laſt ſhe gave me ſo plainly to underſtand ſhe had determined in my favour, that her fortune induced me to accept her offers; we ſoon came to an underſtanding, and I only aſked leave to go and inform my brother of my good fortune, before I married; he approved of my deſign very much, ſaying, if I could bear with Madam Rhubarbin's temper during ſix years, while ſhe was my miſtreſs, I certainly ſhould have much leſs reaſon to fear the effects of it when her huſband; and ſhe would moſt likely behave much better to the man of her own choice, than ſhe had done to her late huſband; ſo though ſhe was far from handſome, by no means young, and of ſo violent a temper, her great opulence made me overlook all theſe faults, and at the expiration of a year, during which

which we were always excellent friends, we were married. Her greateſt wiſh was to have a young huſband, and my only idea of happineſs centered in money. The ceremony was privately performed, having previouſly ſigned our marriage articles, the management of which I had left totally to her, having no fortune of my own, I thought I had no right to interfere, and the very next day I aſſumed the name of Rhubarbin, the moſt famous one in our profeſſion; and had ſhe taken my name of Dubois, as ſhe obſerved, the public might loſe their confidence in our ſhop.

I now found myſelf what I had ſo long wiſhed to be, maſter of the firſt ſhop in Paris, and of a very large fortune beſides, as I then thought, but I was very ſoon undeceived reſpecting the latter article, for we had hardly been married ſix weeks, before my wife, being in one of her bleſſed tempers, deſired me to bring in my accounts, which ſhe ſaid ſhe expected to have delivered to her juſt the ſame as when I was Dubois.

I was

I was really amazed at her demand, and exceſſively diſpleaſed when ſhe aſked me if I thought ſhe had been fool enough to deprive herſelf of any power; if I did, I might look over the marriage articles, and convince myſelf of my error.

My brother happened to come the very day this paſſed, to pay us a viſit; he had not been at our wedding, being confined with the rheumatiſm. After the firſt compliments, as he and I were left alone in my room, I told him what had paſſed between my wife and me that very morning. He aſked to look at the marriage articles ſhe alluded to, I went and fetched them, and we found, to my great aſtoniſhment, that I had not reaped the ſlighteſt benefit from my marriage; my wife remained perfect miſtreſs of her fortune, and I was even accountable to her for all the money I took in the ſhop, though it was earned by the ſweat of my brow. My brother was very much vexed, but I was ſtill more ſo, to find myſelf thus a ſlave to the caprice of an inſupportable

portable old woman, without being able to enjoy any of the luxuries which had induced me to marry her, almoſt drove me mad; I curſed the precipitation with which I had parted with my liberty, a thouſand times, and could not forgive myſelf for having placed ſuch a blind confidence in my wife, whoſe fortune I ſhould never poſſeſs, if ſhe choſe to leave it to any other perſon.

My brother blamed my imprudence, at the ſame time tried to conſole me, telling me I muſt lay by what I could during her life time; and as I thought ſhe was with child, (which I had told him) ſhould ſhe die, no unlikely thing at her age, not having had any children before, ſhe could not prevent me from being my child's guardian 'till it became of age, during which time I muſt enjoy her whole fortune, as ſhe could not put it out of my power, and in that caſe, by attending to my buſineſs, I might ſecure a conſiderable ſum for myſelf out of the profits, without defrauding my child; but he did not think

think ſhe would be ſo baſe as to take advantage of the power ſhe had ſo ungenerouſly retained.

I was juſt beginning to anſwer him, when my wife, who had ſuſpected what had paſſed in the morning would be canvaſſed over between us, and had, in conſequence, been liſtening at my room door, ever ſince we had been left together, burſt in upon us like a fury; ſhe treated my brother in the moſt ſcandalous manner, nay, would have tore his eyes out, I verily believe, if I had not put myſelf between them. I wiſhed to reaſon with her, but ſhe would not liſten to either of us, ſhe only inſiſted upon my brother's inſtantly leaving the houſe. Finding gentleneſs was of no uſe, I attempted to exerciſe the authority of a huſband, but nothing I could ſay or do, had any effect upon her, and I believe we ſhould have parted for ever, if my brother had not, contrary to my entreaties, retired, deſiring me to remember my wife's ſituation as he went out; his moderation

tion and retreat ought to have calmed Madam Rhubarbin, but it only increaſed her rage, which ſhe vented upon me. I wiſhed for her death, merely to poſſeſs her fortune; I had only married her for that; ſhe had over-heard every word I had ſaid, but ſhe proteſted ſhe would puniſh me, even after her death, as I had foreſeen, ſhe would put her affairs in ſuch order before ſhe died, that ſhe ſhould have the ſatisfaction of knowing upon her death-bed, ſhe ſhould leave me as poor as when I married her. In ſhort, unable to command my temper, I walked out, and found my brother at a houſe he always uſed. He exhorted me to take patience, particularly while ſhe was with child, adding, every thing obliged me to it, my intereſt, nay, my honour and my religion; ſhe moſt likely would not have many children, therefore, I had the greateſt reaſon to wiſh to preſerve the one ſhe now bore, therefore, to prevent any further quarrels upon his account, he would return home that very day, entreating me to behave as well as I poſſibly could to

my

my wife, without giving up my plan of making what I could for myſelf, unknown to her.

We parted, and I followed his advice; ſtaid almoſt conſtantly at home, knowing my wife hated to have me out of her ſight, for among her other good qualities, ſhe was moſt horribly jealous, and I hardly ever ſpoke to a woman in her preſence, ugly or handſome, without offending her; for this reaſon, though ſhe certainly did not deſerve it, I always left the ſhopmen to ſerve any ladies who came in, or ſent her, if they wiſhed to ſpeak to me, to take their orders. But all my precautions were uſeleſs, for finding I did not take notice of theſe ſtrangers, ſhe perſuaded herſelf I kept a miſtreſs ſome where, and at laſt ſuſpected my affections were placed upon a relation of the late Mr. Rhubarbin's, who reſided with her, and had for ſome time before our marriage. This young perſon might be about five and twenty, was exceſſively good tempered, and as handſome as my wife was the reverſe, but having no fortune, ſhe was very glad

glad to meet with an aſylum, even in our houſe, which was certainly far from an agreeable reſidence, from the bad temper of the miſtreſs of it; however, this young woman now became the object of my wife's moſt ſerious jealouſy, and after ſeveral violent quarrels between us, upon her account, ſhe proteſted ſhe would not keep ſuch a ſtrumpet in her houſe any longer; ſhe therefore ſent her back to her relations at Montpellier, for fear we ſhould meet any where, had ſhe remained at Paris: in ſhort, my Lord, my wife's whole ſtudy was to torment me as much as ſhe had her former huſband, ſo that if I became inſenſible of her bad humours, I was equally ſo to her love; this piqued her more than any thing, and at laſt made her take the greateſt averſion to me, which increaſed her natural bad temper ſo much, ſhe was quite inſupportable; ſhe often puniſhed herſelf at meal times, for fear I ſhould have any thing I liked, either to eat or drink, and I am confident my death would have made her ſtill happier than her late huſband's

huſband's had done. At laſt ſhe laid in of a boy, who coſt her her life, as my brother had foretold, that is, ſhe languiſhed for two months after his birth, and then expired.

During her illneſs, I had the beſt advice, and viſited her very often myſelf, but ſhe never wanted to ſee me, ſhe uſually told me, nay, would hardly ſpeak ſometimes; but convinced ſhe was dying, ſhe remembered what my brother had told me; ſaid ſhe could not prevent my being guardian to this child, whom I really believe ſhe ſincerely wiſhed had never ſeen day light, from that very idea, for the certainty that I ſhould have the controul of all her fortune, during his minority, hurt her more than the thoughts of dying. She had made her will, but before ſhe died, ſhe choſe to alter it; for this purpoſe ſhe ſent for a notary, with whom ſhe conſulted, I preſume, how ſhe could moſt torment me, for there was an inventory taken of every thing in the houſe and ſhop, that ſhe might know to the utmoſt farthing what ſhe

was worth, before ſhe made this laſt will, and in caſe her ſon died before he became of age, ſhe left the whole of her fortune to that very couſin ſhe had ſo ſhamefully turned out of the houſe only a few months before; who was, in fact, her neareſt heir, which had been one reaſon of her firſt ſending for her to Paris. At laſt, however, ſhe died, without my gaining any thing by her death, but repoſe, and even that acquiſition conſoled me a great deal.

I had put my ſon out to nurſe in the village where my brother lived, ſoon after his birth, with Madame Rhubarbin's conſent, who only weakly oppoſed the propoſal, being at that time very low.

She had been dead about a month, and I now only thought of ſaving ſufficient out of my preſent income to live upon, that I might not be obliged to depend upon a child, who formed of her blood, might bear ſome reſemblance to her in point of character, as he grew

grew up, and became ſenſible of the power his mother had veſted in him.

I was thus buſied, laying plans for my future welfare, when I received a letter from my brother, informing me my ſon was very ill, as well as his nurſe, deſiring me to come and ſee him, and to provide another nurſe for him immediately.

As I often had applications from women, to ſupply them with nurſe children, I engaged one I had a very high opinion of, and whom my head ſhopman was acquainted with, determined to bring my ſon back to Paris (ſince I had ſucceeded ſo badly by ſending him into the country) that I might have him under my own eye. I therefore ordered a coach, and bidding this woman come to my houſe that very evening, I ſet out for my brother's, and ſent for the child the moment I arrived, whom I found much worſe than I had expected, from my brother's letter; the nurſe, through her illneſs, had loſt all her milk,

though ſhe had not been confined, my brother told me. I was determined to ſet off with my ſon as ſoon as I had dined. I made ſeveral inquiries concerning his complaint, while the nurſe was with us; ſhe told me he was very ſubject to fits, and had had ſeveral before ſhe was ill.

Conſidering the violent temper of his mother, I thought that was not much to be wondered at; I however ſoon diſmiſſed the woman, but ſhe had not left the houſe half an hour, before the child was ſeized in my arms, while I was nurſing him, with one of theſe convulſive fits, which carried him off in leſs than a quarter of an hour.

Judge, my Lord, of my deſpair, I not only loſt my ſon, but every thing I poſſeſſed in the world; for during ſo ſhort a time, I had not been able to lay any thing by, nor had I received a farthing of the intereſt that was ſoon becoming due upon the money my late wife had placed out. I was therefore now as

poor

poor as when I firſt entered Mr. Rhubarbin's ſervice.

My brother did not know what terms to employ for my conſolation, ſo he remained ſilent, and I ſat thinking what ſteps were beſt for me to purſue, ſituated as I was; when intereſt, that predominant paſſion of my ſoul, ſuggeſted an idea to me; ſo ſtifling my feelings, I addreſſed my brother, who really felt my misfortunes as ſeverely as I did, I therefore entreated he would permit me to conceal my loſs for a little time, at leaſt 'till I had received the firſt half year's dividend, which was nearly due upon my ſon's fortune, that I might have ſomething to depend upon, and to enable me to carry on my buſineſs. The ſecret I required him to keep, was very eaſy, for he had no ſervants, it was his clerk's wife who came every morning to put his pot on, and make his bed, but he always laid his own cloth, &c. we were therefore all alone now, which facilitated my plan. The child was laid down upon the bed, that if any body

came in they might think him aſleep, and my brother liſtened to my propoſals. I told him we had only to bury the child privately, which we might do without any difficulty. He ſtarted at the notion, and notwithſtanding his love for me, I had a great deal of trouble to bring him to conſent to my plan, and to overcome his ſcruples, I employed all my eloquence, and at laſt was fortunate enough to bring him into my way of thinking; ſo we buried the child in one corner of the church, without the aſſiſtance of either clerk or ſexton, I ſupplied both their places, and he carried the child in a little box under his gown, unperceived, into the church, which he lived very near to; but all my entreaties could not prevent his entering my ſon's burial in the pariſh regiſter, which he told me he always kept under lock and key, therefore, it would not be diſcovered a bit the ſooner from this precaution, which it would have been highly improper to omit; he alſo proteſted he did not intend the child's death ſhould remain a ſecret long, only 'till I had received this

money, which, in fact, would neither be wanted nor miſſed by Madame Rhubarbin's heir, and would be of the greateſt uſe to me, and he did not intend paying me a viſit 'till the affair was divulged, as he did not chuſe openly to countenance a falſity.

I agreed to every thing he ſaid juſt then, and as ſoon as we had finiſhed our ſorrowful taſk, I ſet off home in the ſame carriage which had brought me, that had waited at a publick houſe about half a mile diſtant from my brother's. The coachman did not know what had brought me into the country; I had got the clothes the child had on when it died, in my pockets, the reſt of its things were not come from the nurſes. I reſolved to tell my ſervants when I got home, and the nurſe I knew was in waiting, that having found the child much better than I had expected, I had left it in the country, fearing the air of Paris might not agree with it ſo well.

It was quite dark when I entered Paris, and the ſhops were all ſhut, ſo I ordered the coachman to ſtop at the end of the lane which leads to my private poor, of which I always carried a key in my pocket. Juſt as I had got out of the coach, and was advancing up the lane, a woman ran againſt me, and in her hurry to get away, had like to have fallen between the wheels of the carriage, which was juſt turning off. I paid very little attention to her, my head being full of my recent loſs, ſo long as ſhe was not hurt; I therefore advanced to the door, and was walking up the ſteps, when I found I kicked ſomething with my foot, ſo I put my hand down to feel what it was, and found a baſket, which I took up, and was preparing to unlock the door, meaning to have taken it in with me, but finding it rather heavy, I was going to ſet it down while I got the door open, when the voice of a child proceeding from it, ſtopt me, and I eaſily gueſſed, that the woman whom I met,

was

was the perſon who expoſed it, by her haſte to get away. After pauſing a moment, hardly knowing what to do, when a delightful thought ſtruck me, and I looked upon finding this child as one of the greateſt bleſſings Providence could have ſent me, labouring under the misfortune I did, hoping to be able to enjoy, through its means, by making it paſs for my own, a fortune that was the ſole object of my deſires; but I muſt firſt be ſatisfied concerning its ſex. I dared not enter my own houſe for that purpoſe, but taking up the baſket again very gently, in both hands, I walked back into the Rue St. Honoré, and after walking ſome diſtance, I called a hackney coach, and got in with my baſket, which I opened the moment I was ſafe, having bid the coachman drive to a houſe I had often uſed, while I was ſhopman to Mr. Rhubarbin. By the quantity of trinkets I found about the child, and the fineneſs of his dreſs, which I perceived by the light of the lamps, I was convinced

convinced it belonged to ſome perſon of diſtinction, who would moſt likely one day or other reclaim it, thinking they would hardly have put ſo many valuable trinkets about it, which were ſo many marks to deſcribe it by, had they meant to have abandoned it for ever. However, I determined before I ſtopped, if it proved to be a boy, I would never reſtore him to his parents, as it would be impoſſible for any one to prove I had really found the child, determined, during my life time, at leaſt, he ſhould paſs for mine. It was your ſon, my Lord, conſequently his ſex perfectly agreed with my wiſhes.

I ſoon ſtopped where I had ordered, having covered the child over in the baſket, with the clothes that had belonged to mine, which I had about me. I got out, diſcharged the coach, and walked into the houſe, telling the miſtreſs of it that I had been into the country to fetch my ſon home, and not having had the

the precaution to take the nurſe I had engaged with me, the child was half famiſhed, and was ſo croſs, I was obliged to ſtop before I got home, deſiring ſhe would inſtantly make him ſomething to eat. The landlady ſhewed me into a room, ſaying, ſhe would obey my orders immediately, pitying the poor little fellow.

As ſoon as ſhe had left the room, I undreſſed the child, and put it on the clothes which I had covered it over with, putting thoſe he had on in the baſket again. I had hardly finiſhed my job, though I was as expeditious as poſſible about it, before the woman returned with his victuals: as I was ſtill buſy, I told her I had been looking if any pins hurt him, for I had not been able to put him totally to rights.

She took him from me, praiſed his beauty, which really was very ſtriking, thought he was

was very like me, ſhe aſſured me, and after having fed and finiſhed dreſſing him, by my deſire, ſhe ſent for a coach for me; I had ſhut the baſket down before ſhe came in the ſecond time, and as ſoon as the coach arrived, I returned home.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP.

# COUNT

# ST. BLANCARD,

## OR, THE

# Prejudiced Judge,

*A NOVEL.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

*BY MRS. MEEK.*

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# COUNT St. BLANCARD.

# COUNT

# ST. BLANCARD.

## CHAP. I.

WHEN I arrived, I found them juſt going to bed, having given up all thoughts of ſeeing me that night; but the nurſe was ſtill waiting, ſo I delivered your Lordſhip's ſon into her charge, deſiring her to take particular care of him, though he was much better than I had expected to find him, adding, I would not have him leave the houſe for ſome

time, for fear of a relapſe, which might prove fatal to him with the change of milk, &c.

I thought the woman looked ſurpriſed when ſhe ſaw him, for he certainly appeared younger than ſhe had expected, but I obviated any ſuſpicions that might ariſe from that notion, by attributing his being ſo ſmall to his late illneſs, and his healthy looks to his ſudden recovery. I mentioned the mark upon his arm, which I had not been able to efface when I undreſſed him, ſaying, it was a precaution I had taken, to prevent his being changed at nurſe, as I had heard ſuch things were practiſed ſometimes.

Having now diſmiſſed her for the night with the infant, I looked over all the jewels that were in the baſket, determined never to part with any of them, and that your ſon ſhould have them all at my death; and for fear I might be taken ſuddenly, I wrote down all that had happened to me that very day, before I went to bed, ſealed my packet when I had

I had concluded, and put it into the baſket, which I locked up in a cloſet I was determined no one ſhould ever go to but myſelf; and I encloſed the certificate of my ſon's burial, which my brother had forced me to take, in my letter.

I kept the nurſe in the houſe, and would hardly ſuffer her to ſtir out of my ſight for the firſt ſix weeks after I had found the infant, nor ever allowed her to bring him into the ſhop, ſaying, the ſmell of drugs was very hurtful to children. I took theſe precautions in caſe thoſe that had expoſed him, ſhould come, under any pretence, to diſcover if he had really fallen into my hands.

At the end of three months, I flattered myſelf I was ſafe, and that I ſhould be able to enjoy, under his name, a fortune I had loſt by the death of the child he replaced. But I ſoon found all my difficulties had not ceaſed; the time my brother had promiſed to conceal the death of my child, was more than ex-

pired, and I had received the dividend which had occaſioned this ſtratagem. This he knew, and wrote me ſeveral letters, deſiring I would make my ſon's death publick. I really began to think heaven favoured my iniquities, for juſt as I was in the greateſt perplexity to deviſe ſome means of preventing my brother from rendering all my precautions fruitleſs, by diſcovering my ſecret; he was ſeized with an apoplexy, which carried him off in a few minutes.

I was really very much afflicted when I learnt the news, but I ſhould have been ſtill more ſo, if this misfortune had not put a final ſtop to his remonſtrances, and raiſed the only difficulty I had left to combat with.

There had been ſo many births, deaths and marriages in the village ſince my ſon died, that his burial was ſeveral ſheets back in the regiſter, therefore, I thought it was a great chance if the rector, who ſucceeded my brother, ever took the trouble of looking ſo far

ſar back, and if he did, as the child was mentioned under the name of Dubois, I thought it might not ſtrike him particularly, as moſt people thought my name was really Rhubarbin, and every body ſuppoſed my ſon was alive and hearty; having told his former nurſe (whom I had never ſeen ſince ſhe delivered my ſon into my own hands upon the day I loſt him, 'till I went down again to ſettle my brother's affairs, and to take poſſeſſion of what little he left behind him) that her former charge was quite recovered and as hearty as ever.

She aſſured me ſhe was very happy to hear it, and I was not leſs pleaſed to find ſhe was totally ignorant of his death; I therefore thought myſelf quite ſecure now, and began to enjoy the fruits of my fraud; reſolved to ſpare no expence upon the child's education, which I determined ſhould be ſuitable to his birth, which from the note, card, trinkets, &c. I preſumed was as illuſtrious as it really is; and when he became of a proper age, I

allowed him whatever money he choſe. He was of ſo excellent a temper, that I never had reaſon to repent of my indulgence towards him; he loved me, I flatter myſelf, as much as any ſon ever did a father, and I could not have loved a ſon of Madam Rhubarbin half ſo well as I did him; I diſcovered freſh virtues in him every day, and cultivated them as well as I was able, thinking myſelf peculiarly fortunate in being bleſſed with ſuch a child.

I had plenty of money now at command, and was adding conſiderably to my income every year: in ſhort, the fortune my wife had left her ſon, would have ſupported this amiable young man very handſomely, without following any profeſſion, but I could not think of making a gentleman of him, nor did I like the idea of giving him a rank above myſelf, fearful the world would condemn what they would have looked upon as miſtaken pride.

At a proper age I took care to inform him how he was ſituated in reſpect to his fortune, and

and what power his ſuppoſed mother had veſted in him; but he always declared he never would take the management of his affairs upon himſelf during my life time, and ſhould always be ſatisfied with what I choſe to allow him. However, I intended to have given him up that part Madam Rhubarbin had appropriated for her ſon's uſe, independant of the ſhop and my own ſavings, as ſoon as he was five and twenty, and to allow him whatever he required to ſupport him handſomely 'till then, and by our laws he could not demand it before.

He wiſhed very much to go into the army, but my fear of loſing him, made me put a decided negative upon this requeſt. He reſpected me too much, he ſaid, not to conform to my advice, as I muſt know what ſuited him better than he could; having alſo ſtudied the law, he wiſhed very much to have appeared at the bar, but I objected to that, ſo to oblige me, he ſtudied phyſic, contrary, I know, to his own inclination; but he overcame all the

prejudices he entertained againſt that profeſſion, and has ſucceeded in it much beyond my moſt ſanguine hopes.

I had really almoſt forgot he was not my ſon, when you ſent for me my Lord, about two years ago: I obeyed your orders without gueſſing the cauſe of them, and I cannot expreſs to you the ſorrow I felt, upon your diſcovering a ſecret to me I had not the leaſt curioſity to fathom. However, I ſoon determined to deny having found your ſon; neither menaces nor ſupplications could force me to diſcover the truth againſt my will; the only thing which frightened me was, the remarkable ſtrong reſemblance your ſon bears to his mother; 'till that time I never had the honour of ſeeing her Ladyſhip, and my ſurpriſe was ſo great when I firſt remarked it, that your Ladyſhip perceived it, and conſtrued it very juſtly, into a proof of my guilt. You therefore accuſed me of having killed your ſon, and I was really happy to hear the

turn

turn your ſuſpicions took, for I had little to fear upon that ſcore; but I was alarmed after I got home, and began to reflect upon the danger I had juſt run; and upon revolving the whole adventure in my mind, every thing increaſed my terror, leſt you might come at the real truth, when I leaſt expected it. I fancied you might imagine I made your ſon paſs for mine, and was convinced this thought would ſtrike you, were you ever to meet him, from the ſtrong reſemblance I had remarked, which you muſt have taken notice of, and I am even now ſurpriſed it did not ſtrike your Lordſhip when you examined him; but knowing who he was, as you thought, you were prepared to ſee the ſon of a man you deteſted, and with reaſon, ſo I preſume you hardly looked at him, for fear you ſhould feel yourſelf ſoftened in his favour.

I little thought, my Lord, the firſt time you told me who he was, he would ever appear before your Lordſhip as a criminal, but

to prevent any unforeſeen event, for I had every thing to dread now; I determined to ſend him to Padua, as it would have appeared very odd to him, my Lord, had I ordered him to have kept out of your's, or your Lady's way, without giving him ſome reaſon for making ſuch a ſtrange requeſt. He had not returned from Montpellier more than four months, and had ſpent that time at St. * * *, at Monſieur de Ceare's, where he was fortunate enough, through his ſkill, to ſave his daughter's life.

The Preſident made an involuntary geſture of indignation and amazement, and Madame exclaimed, how could Monſieur de Ceare thus overlook ſo important a ſervice?

R..ubarbin took no notice, but continued, ſaying, I expected him every day when you ſent for me, my Lord, and he arrived the third day after I had made the fatal diſcovery; ſo not chuſing he ſhould be ſeen at Paris juſt then,

then, I propoſed the journey to him; he was pleaſed at the idea, and ſat off for Italy the following day. Though I was really exceſſively hurt in being thus obliged to part with him, yet I was more at my eaſe than if he had remained at home, and I thought him at Padua, when I learnt his detention. He had mentioned his intention of returning in his laſt letters, which I had rather oppoſed.

Judge, therefore, my Lord, how great my alarm was, when I learned his unexpected return from the gaoler of the Conciergerie, and the crimes he ſtood accuſed of.

For ſome time I was unable to believe him, and was hardly perſuaded it could be my ſon, but I was too well convinced at laſt it was really him, and knowing who was his judge, I thought I could only ſave his life by diſcloſing my ſecret; and all the riches in the world would not have conſoled me had he ſuffered.

I have now diſcovered every thing, my Lord, ſaid Rhubarbin, enjoy the fruits of my care; I return your ſon worthy of ſuch parents, and you are now informed why I perſiſted ſo obſtinately in concealing my having found him, though my honour, my conſcience and my humanity, ought to have made me give him up to you the moment you reclaimed him. Send ſomebody with me whom you can depend upon, and I will give them the baſket your ſon was expoſed in, in which you will find all the things I have already mentioned, and a ſouvenir, which I never opened, being unable to diſcover the ſecret, which faſtened it, and not daring to truſt it in the hands of any body elſe; beſides the correſpondence between my brother and me, which I choſe to put into the baſket, upon his deceaſe, meaning to have delivered the whole to your ſon, upon my death bed.

Here Mr. Rhubarbin ceaſed to ſpeak, and the Preſident and his wife both aſſured him of their

their friendſhip, promiſing to accommodate the matter between his couſin and him, privately, without his running any of the riſks he ſo much feared.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

RHUBARBIN, penetrated with gratitude, was going to thank them, when Madame La Preſidente interrupted him, by addreſſing her huſband, "Oh my dear huſband, while you are making promiſes, it is but juſt to effectuate; our dear ſon is in a dungeon, loaded with irons; every moment you loſe thus, only increaſes the danger he is already in, and this delay may render all future care uſeleſs, and deprive us of him at the moment he is reſtored to us, for ever."

Here

Here ſhe burſt into tears, and was ſome time before ſhe could ſpeak, while her countenance ſtrongly expreſſed the agitation of her ſoul.

"You are much in the right, my love," ſaid the Preſident, taking her hand, "pray compoſe yourſelf, we will inſtantly go and inform him of this happy diſcovery, which has thus altered his deſtiny."

Madame La Preſidente inſtantly roſe from her chair, ſo great was her anxiety to be gone.

"Let me entreat you would not think of ſuch a thing," ſaid Rhubarbin, ſtarting up, half wild, "reflect, I entreat, upon what might be the conſequence of an abrupt diſcovery; allow me to ſee him firſt; 'till now, through your orders, I have been refuſed that favour, but as I am told he is very ill, I know his temper, and what he muſt have ſuffered from his confinement, and dreadful reflection,

therefore, he muſt be prepared by degrees for the happineſs which awaits him."

The Preſident and his Lady both liſtened to the Apothecary very anxiouſly, and ſaid,

" Muſt we be ſtill deprived of the pleaſure of embracing our long loſt ſon, but we will be adviſed."

" The ſurpriſe and joy would overcome him at preſent," ſaid Rhubarbin, " ſo let us only begin by ſoftening the rigours of his priſon, and informing him he will ſoon be juſtified and releaſed."

Madame La Preſidente, who was all attention, could not help approving of Rhubarbin's propoſal, therefore ſhe and her huſband agreed the Apothecary ſhould wait upon their ſon. But this tender mother, thinking every moment would be an age, 'till ſhe had ſeen this darling child, entreated ſhe might accompany Rhubarbin juſt to ſee him, without

out making herſelf known; ſhe only deſired to paſs for a friend of the Apothecary's, who wiſhed to ſerve the young man.

Mr. Rhubarbin ſhook his head, and the Preſident, convinced ſhe would betray the intereſt ſhe took in the priſoner, entreated her to give up all ideas of the kind.

"If you dare not truſt me, my dear huſband, you can depend upon your own prudence, therefore, you ſhall ſupply my place, and act the part I wiſhed to have undertaken, that you may bring me word how our ſon is."

The Preſident was convinced he ſhould be more able to conquer his feelings than ſhe would, and his anxiety was not leſs to ſee his ſon, whom he ſo tenderly loved, without even knowing him, he therefore very readily agreed to a propoſition he had not dared to make, after having oppoſed his wife's wiſhes to accompany the Apothecary. He wiſhed particularly to be convinced of the great likeneſs

Rhubarbin

Rhubarbin ſaid ſubſiſted between his ſon and his wife, which he had not remarked; indeed he had formed no idea of his figure, from what he had ſeen of him when he examined him, which was not to be wondered at, when we conſider that Dubois appeared before him in irons, totally undreſſed, and juſt come out of a dirty dungeon.

Rhubarbin had agreed to the Preſident's accompanying him, without reflection, but now ſaid, "he had much better go alone, he would hardly be anſwerable for the conſequences, if his Lordſhip accompanied him; the young man would immediately diſcover his judge in his pretended friend, and what would he think if he did?"

The Preſident and his wife looked at each other, but the fond father's hopes having been raiſed to ſuch a pitch, he declared he could not give up the idea; "ſuppoſe he was to recollect him," ſaid the Preſident, he could not put any unfavourable conſtruction

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tion upon his viſit, ſince he came with his ſuppoſed father: however, he would quit all appearance of a magiſtrate, and merely put on a common morning frock, by that means he could not be ſtruck with the reſemblance; and at all events, the priſoner would only ſuppoſe he had accompanied him for the beſt of purpoſes."

Madame La Preſidente was of her huſband's way of thinking, and Rhubarbin acknowledged the force of their argument, and ſaid, he would ſet off as ſoon as his Lordſhip choſe.

The Preſident changed his dreſs in a few minutes, and they both ſet out for the Conciergerie. They were let in by the keeper, who did not know either of them; the Preſident immediately aſked for the maſter, who appeared in a few ſeconds. The Preſident took him on one ſide, and made himſelf known to him. He had ſeen the Apothecary before, and was not inclined to ſhew him much

much politeneſs now, 'till he knew who accompanied him, but as ſoon as the magiſtrate had declared his name, he was all ſubmiſſion.

The Preſident deſired this man not to mention who he was, neither during the time he ſtaid there, nor after his departure, and particularly not to addreſs him by his title before the priſoner they were come to ſee. He bowed aſſent, and the Preſident deſired a good bed might be prepared, underſtanding the young man was very ill. The gaoler inſtantly gave the order concerning the bed, and ſaid he would accompany the gentlemen, as they deſired, to the priſoner.

He now got a candle, and preceded them down a very narrow ſtone ſtaircaſe, which led to a long dark paſſage under ground, on each ſide of which were ſeveral doors, which opened into dungeons of the moſt horrid kind, as the only light or air they received, proceeded from a double iron grate

grate in the doors, which communicated into this paſſage. The man ſtopped at one of them, and after unbolting and unlocking, which took up near five minutes, he opened the door, and diſcovered the unfortunate Dubois, who lay extended upon a little dirty ſtraw, half wet through by the continued damp of the place, overcome by the weight of heavy irons, want of reſt, both of body and mind, and a violent fever. As he had not been allowed the ſight of a ſingle friend during his confinement, he had had no changes of any kind, and this, added to the filth and horror of the hole he was confined in, it was only wonderful he was ſtill alive; the only perſon he had ever ſeen, was this tender feeling gaoler, who never failed to adminiſter his kind of comfort, which was, when he complained, "patience, your ſorrows will ſoon be at an end."

Though the Preſident was come prepared for this horrid ſight, he ſtarted back when the door opened, and looked round him, "Is it poſſible,"

poſſible," he exclaimed, in a low voice, "that a human being can exiſt in ſuch a place?"

"This is one of our beſt," ſaid the gaoler.

The Preſident turned his back, to conceal his emotion, and it was with difficulty he could reſtrain his tears. Poor Rhubarbin had not the ſame reaſons to prevent his giving way to his feelings, he burſt into tears the moment he perceived the deplorable ſtate his dear ſon was in.

As for the priſoner, he heard his door open with a kind of tranquillity and joy, thinking he was going to his trial, prefering death, no doubt, to the dreadful life he then led. He was not laid facing the door, or if he had, he would not have been able to have ſeen any body behind his gaoler in that diſmal paſſage, and the light ſerved to dazzle him; but this humane man ſet the candle down upon a large piece of wood which was fixed in the ground,

ground, and which the priſoner's chains were faſtened down to, and then left the cell, upon the Preſident's waving his hand down the paſſage. Dubois did not addreſs his gaoler, only turned his head as he went out, and caught ſight of Rhubarbin.

"Oh gracious heaven!" he exclaimed, "am I ſo happy as to ſee my deareſt and beſt of father's once more," raiſing himſelf while he ſpoke, and extending his arms. Rhubarbin fell upon his knees by his ſide, and claſped him to his boſom, without being able to utter a word.

"Oh my dear father," ſaid Dubois, "ſee what your miſerable ſon is come to; let my fate be what it will now, I ſhall meet it with fortitude; I no longer hoped for this bleſſing; I thought you had totally abandoned me."

Rhubarbin

Rhubarbin bathed him with his tears, and only tried, by his careſſes, to convince him how much he was miſtaken.

" Oh, ſir," ſaid the unfortunate priſoner, " don't kill me before my time. You have heard now, I am ſure, what I am accuſed of, the moſt horrid of all crimes, though I proteſt, by all that's ſacred, I am as innocent of the vile deeds and intentions laid to my charge, as the child unborn, and ſhould I end my days upon a ſcaffold, and you ſhould be diſhonoured through my puniſhment, do not abhor the memory of your guiltleſs ſon."

" Be comforted, my dear Dubois," ſaid Rhubarbin, in a ſtifled voice, again preſſing him in his arms.

" Oh my dear father, thank God I never did any thing an honeſt man need be aſhamed of; but you called me Dubois after ſo long an abſence, ſure you have not been led to believe

believe me guilty of any of the baſe actions that have been ſo falſely laid to my charge."

"My dear child, my dear ſon," ſaid Rhubarbin, "I am convinced of your innocence, don't give way to fear or deſpair; I am fortunate enough to be able to aſſure you, that you have every thing to hope, and that I am not the only one convinced, how falſely you have been accuſed, which I was certain of from the firſt moment I heard of your confinement."

"Ah, my dear father, you are thoroughly acquainted with my heart: but how many meſſages have I ſent to you? I had given up all hopes."

"Could my dear boy ſuppoſe I ſhould have loſt a moment in ſatisfying his wiſhes and my own? no, believe me, I have more than once preſented myſelf at your priſon gates, and uſed all the perſuaſions I was maſter of, to obtain admittance, but I was not

allowed to ſee my darling ſon; however, be aſſured, though I have been deprived of this bleſſing 'till now, I have not loſt a moment in trying to ſee you juſtified, and I promiſe you I have, in a great meaſure, ſucceeded; the error is already very much diſſipated, and I am certain you will very ſhortly leave this place triumphant."

"Ah, my dear father," ſaid Dubois, looſening his arms, and looking him in the face, "I am not ſo ſanguine in my hopes; I am not afraid of ſuffering for any crimes; I ſhould feel more upon your account than my own; you may have been flattered, but my judge, I am certain, is prejudiced againſt me; I have always heard him ſpoken of in the higheſt terms, for his integrity and impartiality, but I am afraid this once he has been very much miſled; Monſieur de Ceare has been able, through his power and eloquence, to make the worthy man deviate from his natural rectitude.

"Once

" Once more let me aſſure you, you have nothing to fear," ſaid Rhubarbin, " I am confident you will be honourably acquitted; your judge is already diſabuſed."—Here Rhubarbin pauſed, and looked at his ſon as if he thought he had gone too far.

" Well, my dear father, I muſt truſt to the juſtneſs of my cauſe, my innocence alone has ſupported me hitherto; that villain Champagne," and was going to give his father a detail of all that had paſſed, when Rhubarbin interrupted him, and ſaid " he was already acquainted with every thing concerning that abominable abandoned wretch, but he ſhould have ample revenge for all he had ſuffered through his lies, as ſoon as he was at liberty."

Dubois looked at the Apothecary very earneſtly, and ſaid, with an innocent ſmile, " I don't ſeek revenge, my dear father, may God forgive him as ſincerely as I do, whether I ever ſee him again or not: but appear-

ances are very much againſt me, and I ſhall not have time allowed me to prove my innocence; if you can get my trial put off for a month, I am certain I can bring people to prove where I have been for every hour for a twelvemonth paſt, almoſt," and was going to enter upon ſome particulars, thinking his father's viſit might be a very limited one; but Rhubarbin aſſured him he would liſten to all he had to ſay, as ſoon as he was out of his dungeon, ſaying, he had already got a permiſſion to have him removed into one of the beſt rooms the priſon afforded, where he hoped he would wait with patience the concluſion of his affair.

The young man now began to think there was ſome ſlight hope.

"Have you been ſo fortunate, my dear father? to be ſure this is a miſerable bad place; but is not the permiſſion for my removal granted, more upon account of my health, than upon any hopes of my acquittal?

if

if ſo, let me remain here, I had better die in a dungeon, than upon a ſcaffold."

"You will be at liberty in a few days, my dear ſon," ſaid Rhubarbin."—Juſt then the gaoler returned.

"Ah, my dear father," ſaid Dubois, "I ſee we are going to be ſeparated."

But the man addreſſed the Preſident, who had remained a ſilent ſpectator without the door, ſaying, "the room was quite ready." Dubois looked very anxiouſly towards the door, and was very much ſurpriſed to perceive the Preſident, whom, 'till now, he had not noticed; his viſible emotion increaſed, and greatly aſtoniſhed him.

The Preſident, unable to ſpeak, made the gaoler a ſign to knock off the priſoner's irons. This good man took great pains to expreſs his reſpect for the Preſident's high rank; he bowed every time he ſpoke to him, and made

all the haſte in his power to obey his orders; in a few minutes he compleated the job, and would have aſſiſted the priſoner to have got upon his legs, but he gave his hand to his father, and ſoon raiſed himſelf, ſaying, "Oh what a pleaſure there is in feeling one's legs," but he was hardly able to ſtand upon them; however, in a few ſeconds, he ſaid he could walk; his legs had got very ſtiff from his confined poſture, for his chains were too ſhort to allow him to ſtand upright. The Preſident offered to aſſiſt him, but he thanked him with his uſual politeneſs, and ſaid, "he would take hold of his father's arm;" by this ſupport, and great efforts of his own, he got into the room which was prepared for him. "Oh, now," ſaid he, "I can breathe," ſitting down in an old wooden chair.

Clothes and refreſhments were arrived, and the Apothecary aſſiſted him to undreſs, put him on clean linen, and helped him into bed, though the one he laid down in, hardly deſerved

ſerved the appellation; but it had had a pair of clean ſheets put on, and had a ſubſtitute for a curtain.

The Preſident could only ſit ſtill, and give way to his ſorrow and regret, at not being able to convey him to his own houſe immediately; however, convinced he was in want of ſomething, he aroſe, and poured out a glaſs of wine, which he preſented to him, after aſking Rhubarbin's permiſſion, ſaying, that would give him ſpirits.

Dubois looked at the Preſident ſeveral times, by day-light, but had not the ſlighteſt recollection of having ever ſeen him before; he returned the glaſs, and while Rhubarbin was leaning over him, to put the clothes to rights, aſked him, in a low voice, "who that gentleman was, who ſeemed ſo affected by their misfortunes," for he looked upon his father as being as much to be pitied as himſelf.

But the Preſident was too attentive to let any thing eſcape him, he overheard what he ſaid, and returning to the bed, he put out his hand to his ſon, ſaying, "you ſhall know who I am when you get well: be aſſured I am one of your beſt friends." The Preſident ſpoke with ſuch emotions, that had Dubois heard his voice a thouſand times before, he would not have recollected it then. The young man ſaid he was much obliged to him for the intereſt he took in his diſtreſs, and if he lived to ſee him abroad again, he would renew his thanks.

The Preſident was too much affected, to think there ſhould remain a doubt to anſwer him, and for fear he might do more harm than good, now he had ſeen his ſon ſo much better ſituated, he ſaid he would take his leave; then addreſſing Rhubarbin, ſaid, "I preſume you won't leave your ſon? I ſhall be wanted at home."

The

The Apothecary perfectly underſtood him, thanked him, and promiſed to ſee him in the evening.

" Before then I hope to have made great progreſs in your affairs," ſaid the Preſident; he then wiſhed Dubois a good day, and deſired him to take courage, aſſuring him he would very ſoon be able to leave the Conciergerie.

Rhubarbin ſaid he hoped to be able to give him a very good account of him, when he ſaw him again, and thus they parted.

The Preſident haſtened home with all imaginable ſpeed, to relieve his wife's anxiety. She was exceſſively ſhocked at the Preſident's account, and he made much the beſt of their ſon's ſituation; but the hopes of very ſoon having him under their own roof, and being able to make him ſome amends for his paſt and preſent ſufferings, conſoled them both. They began to debate the diſ-

agreeable adventure over, that had laid him open to Monſieur de Ceare's reſentment; and if the Preſident could hardly believe Dubois guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, he was ſtill more convinced his ſon was perfectly innocent.

Madame La Preſidente aſked her huſband a thouſand queſtions concerning his figure, likeneſs to her, &c. which the Preſident acknowledged was ſo ſtriking, he only wondered it had eſcaped his notice during his examination.

Rhubarbin ſpent the whole day with the priſoner, who wiſhed to have had a great deal of diſcourſe with him, and wanted to know again who the gentleman was who had accompanied him; but Rhubarbin gave him a look, to prevent his talking, as there was another perſon preſent, a priſoner like himſelf—the gaoler had told the Preſident when they came into the room, who ſlept in another

another apology for a bed, in one of the corners.

It was late in the evening before the Apothecary left him, and when he did, ſaid he ſhould ſee him early in the morning, and he ſhould leave orders with the gaoler to let one of his men ſet up with him, in caſe he wanted any thing in the night; but his fellow priſoner entreated he might ſupply the place of one of the keepers, ſaying, they were very unfeeling wretches, and he would attend upon his ſon with the greateſt pleaſure.

As this man ſeemed much above the common run of the priſoners, and was very well dreſſed, Rhubarbin conſented to his propoſition with the utmoſt joy, and aſſured him he felt himſelf very happy to think he ſhould leave his ſon in ſuch excellent hands. Before they parted, Rhubarbin thinking gold an infallible cure for almoſt every thing, conveyed a purſe, into which he had put three hundred Louis d'ors that very morning

(meaning to have employed every farthing, to obtain a ſight of the Preſident, even had he been obliged to bribe every ſervant in the houſe) privately into bed to his ſon. It is not to be ſuppoſed this money had much effect upon the health of the priſoner, but the aſſurances he had received of his ſpeedy enlargement, and the preliminary ſteps which had been taken, gave him ſuch hopes, that it had occaſioned a conſiderable amendment ſince the morning.

His ſituation was now really comfortable, to what it had been, and his gaoler treated him with every mark of reſpect when he entered his room.

He had laid in bed great part of the day, and after taking ſomething the Apothecary prepared for him, had a few hours ſleep, ſo as ſoon as Rhubarbin was gone, finding himſelf much refreſhed, he told his companion he ſhould like to get up; this, the other, by no means oppoſed. As ſoon as he was

was dreſſed, they entered into converſation, and Dubois was favoured with the life and adventures of his fellow priſoner.

This man had remained ſilent all day, on account of Rhubarbin's preſence, who was too much occupied by his own reflections, while Dubois was aſleep, to talk to any body, he therefore now made up for his forced taciturnity: he began as follows.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

HE was a man of family and fortune, he ſaid, but had been rather imprudent, and was now confined for debts he did not owe, and had been promiſed his liberty many times, but his adverſaries had more power than he had, ſo he was ſtill the victim of their baſeneſs, therefore, he was now convinced he ſhould never leave the priſon in an honourably way, by their conſent, and had

had taken means to obtain his liberty in a different way.

Dubois begged to know what meaſures he had purſued.

After having exacted a promiſe of ſecreſy, he informed him, that having been ſole tenant of the room for near a twelvemonth, he had been able to make a hole in the wall behind his bed, unperceived, through which he intended to make his eſcape that very evening. He had been exceedingly vexed when he found he was going to have a companion, ſo mal-apropos, but was now exceedingly happy he had it in his power to facilitate his eſcape as well as his own, and entreated Dubois would ſeize the ſame opportunity.

Dubois liſtened to his companion very attentively, and after a pauſe, ſaid, "as his reaſons to fear an ignominious death had ceaſed, he did not perceive the neceſſity of taking ſuch a ſtep."

"Do

"Do not truſt to appearances," ſaid the other, very anxiouſly, "you won't be the firſt innocent man by many hundreds, who have ſuffered wrongfully upon the Place de Grêve. Your father and his friend may very likely be miſtaken, and only wiſhed to give you ſpirits, finding you ſo ill; they may only have got your confinement ſoftened, upon that account, and therefore be ruled by me, keep well while you are ſo, if you can; you will not be more guilty after you have made your eſcape, than you are now, and you can juſtify yourſelf when you are at liberty, much better than in priſon, and I ſay you will repent if you let this opportunity ſlip. As for me, my reſolution is fixed; I have had friends to ſee me in priſon, a favour you have been denied, ſo I have been able to ſettle my plan for my eſcape; I have a poſt chaiſe waiting I know, by this time, within a few yards of the priſon, and if you will accept of a place in it, I ſhall be very glad of your company, and we will travel to Spain together; or if you know of any place near Paris, where you

are

are at a certainty of not being diſcovered, you may preſer ſuch an aſylum to ſo long a jaunt; but at all events, let us leave the Conciergerie together, for depend upon it, if juſtice has wings of ether to conduct one to priſon, they are transformed into lead, when ſhe ought to liberate you."

Dubois ſat quite in a reverie during this diſcourſe, and was reflecting upon what he ought to do: there was ſome reaſon in what his companion had ſaid, and he had ſuffered ſo much during his ſhort confinement, that he at laſt, after a few objections, which the other eaſily removed, conſented to accompany him, ill and weak as he was, to Madrid, where the other was certain they ſhould arrive in ſafety. They would have ſo many hours advance upon any people that might be ſent in purſuit of them; therefore Dubois now thought he would write to his father, as ſoon as he was in ſafety, to let him know what he had done, and to entreat him to proceed in his juſtification.

He

He had plenty of money about him, and he knew his father would ſend him more, as ſoon as he knew where he was. His companion was alſo tolerably provided, which made Dubois believe him to be what he ſaid he was. Therefore, having ſettled their plan, as ſoon as the gaoler had paid his laſt viſit, and had locked them up for the night, they both paſſed through the hole, found the chaiſe in waiting, as they expected, into which they inſtantly got, and ſet off as hard as the horſes could gallop; they had a perſon forwards, to have their horſes out and ready at every place; they managed and paid ſo well, that they got on at a great pace, and by the time they muſt be miſſed, were convinced they ſhould not have any thing to fear from a purſuit.

Rhubarbin, whoſe love for Dubois was not at all diminiſhed by the diſcovery he had made concerning his birth, was at the door of the priſon before any body was ſtirring, and as ſoon as it was open, he ran up to his patient's

tient's room, eager to inform him that he would be at liberty in two days at ſartheſt.

The gaoler, who had hurried out of bed the moment he heard who was below, accompanied him, making ten thouſand apologies as they went up ſtairs. He unlocked the door, and Rhubarbin advanced into the room, expecting to ſee the curtain of Dubois's bed undrawn when he entered, but not hearing him move, he concluded he was aſleep. He ſtopt for a few ſeconds, and liſtened, 'till a kind of terror ſeized him; he began to fear he might be dead, conſidering the hardſhips he had undergone, he therefore approached the bed in the greateſt agitation, and put by the curtain, but what was his ſurpriſe, upon perceiving it was empty. This misfortune was trifling to the one he had apprehended; he looked anxiouſly round the room, but ſaw only the gaoler, who was ſtanding juſt without the door.

"Why

"Why where are your priſoners," ſaid the Apothecary, advancing haſtily to the other bed, which was alſo deſerted.

The gaoler, trembling with fright and anxiety, now came in, ran firſt to one bed, then to the other; pulled off the clothes, half frantick; looked round the room, under the beds, and ſoon diſcovered the place they had made their eſcape through. The gaoler was infinitely more alarmed than Rhubarbin, who eaſily gueſſed his dear Dubois had been tempted to accompany his fellow priſoner in his flight, and therefore hoped he ſhould ſoon hear from him, as weak as he was, he could not ſuppoſe he had undertaken a long journey, and his certainty of his prudence and ſkill in his own diſorder, contributed greatly to the Apothecary's tranquility; but he could not help abuſing the gaoler for not attending him, as was his duty, when he had ſick priſoners, during the night, in caſe they wanted any thing.

The

The loſs of his priſoners hurt this man much more than the Apothecary's reproaches. The Preſident had given particular orders, when he ſent to know how his ſon did in the evening, that a proper perſon ſhould attend him conſtantly, therefore, how could he excuſe himſelf for his unpardonable negligence; however, as it was impoſſible to conceal the young man's flight, he offered to accompany the Apothecary to the Judges, entreating the former would break the matter to the Preſident, and learn what ſteps he choſe to have taken.

The Preſident and his wife were up, anxiouſly waiting to hear the Apothecary's report, and were exceſſively hurt when they learnt their ſon's flight.

Rhubarbin did all in his power to conſole them, aſſuring them he was convinced he ſhould ſoon hear from him, as he knew he would be very anxious to remove the uneaſineſs

eaſineſs he muſt be certain he ſhould feel upon the occaſion.

At laſt the Preſident, after ſeverely reprimanding the gaoler, diſmiſſed him, deſiring him to take no further trouble in the buſineſs 'till he heard from him, as all ideas of purſuit would be uſeleſs now: the truth is, he did not chuſe his ſon ſhould run the riſk of again falling into the hands of the Maré Chauſſeé, which alone would be ſufficient to kill him, in the weak ſtate he was in; and as the trial was put off, he determined to exert himſelf, during the interval, in procuring proofs of his ſon's innocence.

Buſineſs had called Monſieur de Ceare into the country that very day, therefore, he only learned the ſuppoſed criminal's flight in the evening, too late to entertain any hopes of overtaking him; and his paſſion and rage was ſo violent upon the diſcovery, that it actually brought the gout into his ſtomach, which prevented his immediately waiting upon the Preſident,

Preſident, to conſult with him upon what meaſures ought to be taken.

The Apothecary's hopes were not deceived, he heard from his dear Dubois ſooner than he dared to expect he ſhould have done, and much ſooner than the fugitive had intended; the wiſh to leave his priſon had given him ſtrength, but he had not been able to get any further than Etampes; the coldneſs of the night, to which he had expoſed himſelf, without any precaution; the fears he entertained of being retaken, joined to the rapid movement of the carriage, had increaſed his fever, and diminiſhed his ſtrength ſo much by the next morning, that he was not able to proceed upon his journey, and his companion could not wait for him, without endangering himſelf; he was therefore obliged to leave him at the poſt-houſe, having called upon the curate, and deſired him to ſee he was taken proper care of.

This

This good eccleſiaſtic loſt no time, he got up the moment he was called, and immediately waited upon the ſick man, whom he found very ill, and he thought, in great danger.

His companion, who had ſtopt at the curate's as he went by, was in too great a hurry to continue his journey, to tell him the ſick man's name, or the occaſion of his illneſs: in fact, he would have declined entering into theſe details, had he had more leiſure, for very obvious reaſons; ſo the curate was obliged to interrogate the fugitive himſelf, that he might be able to let his family know of his illneſs, and where he was.

But Dubois, ill as he was, was very ſenſible now of the imprudent ſtep he had taken, and dreaded, more than ever, the thought of being taken into cuſtody again; he therefore did not dare explain any thing to the curate, he only entreated him to procure him a ſheet of paper, and pen and ink, ſaying, he would write

write a few lines, which he begged he would ſend off expreſs to Paris, he directed his letter to Mr. Rhubarbin, and gave the prieſt money to defray the expences of the meſſenger very liberally.

It was by this means that Rhubarbin learnt where his dear Dubois was, in the evening of the ſame day that he had diſcovered his flight. He had remained at the Preſident's all day, at their deſire, that they might at leaſt talk about this darling ſon, they were deprived of the pleaſure of ſeeing. The Apothecary had left word at his own houſe where he ſhould be, and deſired his ſhopman to ſend every body to him, who enquired particularly for him. He was punctually obeyed, as one of his men brought the courier to him the moment he arrived.

At firſt they were all overjoyed at the ſight of the letter, which Rhubarbin inſtantly opened; it only contained theſe few words, which were hardly legible.

 " I really

"I really believe I am dying, my dear father; if you wiſh to afford me the conſolation of expiring in your arms, follow without loſs of time the bearer of this letter."

The ſorrow which this note plunged the whole party into, is eaſily imagined, eſpecially when the courier ſaid, that he had rode all the way from Etampes himſelf, without ſtopping a moment, except to change horſes, and that he had ſeen the gentleman before he ſat out, who looked all but dead; beſides, the curate who was with him, had told him to make all the haſte he poſſibly could, for he hardly expected the ſtranger would live 'till he returned.

Mr. Rhubarbin aſked "if he arrived at Etampes alone."

"No," ſaid the man, "another gentleman was with him, who had left him in a fit at the poſt houſe, and had gone on as faſt as poſſible, after having called up the curate to his

his aſſiſtance; but he was upon ſuch urgent buſineſs, he had not had time to inform them of any thing concerning the gentleman he had brought the letter from."

The Preſident and his wife were half diſtracted, and wanted, both, to ſet off inſtantly, upon hearing this dreadful news. But Rhubarbin's prudence did not forſake him, much as he was hurt by the terrible account he had received; he therefore oppoſed their intention very ſtrongly, alledging the ſame reaſons he had before, ſaying, "their ſon was certainly in much greater danger now, than when the Preſident laſt ſaw him, therefore, any violent emotion muſt be attended with the moſt dangerous conſequences. He knew his conſtitution was naturally good, and he ſtill retained great hopes, if they would allow him to adviſe them this once."

They begged he would explain his intentions.

He propoſed to ſet out alone immediately for Etampes, as the ſight of any ſtrangers, juſt now, would naturally alarm the young man, whoſe flight muſt convince them how ſtrong his fears of an ignominious death ſtill were, entreating therefore they would go to a ſeat which he knew they had about five leagues from Etampes, near Orleans, from whence, he begged, they would ſend their coach to him, as ſoon as they arrived, and if it was poſſible, or ſafe for their ſon to be removed, he would conduct him to their caſtle, without his knowing whither he was going, as he ſhould only tell him he meant to take him to a particular friend's of his, the ſame gentleman he ſaw in priſon, at whoſe houſe he would certainly avoid any ſearch that might be made after him.

The Preſident and his wife agreed to the Apothecary's propoſal very willingly, and they all agreed to ſet out immediately, and to travel all night, by which means they would be

be able to ſend their coach to him the next day.

Rhubarbin inſtantly took his leave, and went home for what he wanted, while a very light cabriolet of the Preſident's was got ready for him; it was at his door in leſs than half an hour, attended by a ſervant, who was to officiate as courier; he therefore ſet off full ſpeed, and arrived at Etampes the next morning by breakfaſt.

He found his dear Dubois exceſſively ill, having paſſed a very bad night, but the ſight of his father revived him. The Apothecary had every thing with him neceſſary for his complaint, and got him to take ſomething immediately; and as he was perfectly ſenſible, Mr. Rhubarbin deſired he would not alarm himſelf, as he really had nothing to fear. But Dubois could not agree with his father upon this point, and lamented very much his having been taken ill at ſuch a miſerable inn, where he was in danger of being

diſcovered every moment. Rhubarbin aſſured him every body thought he was concealed ſomewhere in the environs of Paris, as the ſituation he was known to be in when he left the priſon, had taken off all ideas of his travelling, and he could not help obſerving, how imprudently he had acted, in expoſing his life ſo uſeleſſly, after all the aſſurances he had given him; but as what is done cannot be helped, I do not think you ought to remain here, not from any fears I entertain for your ſafety, but becauſe I think the accommodations are very bad, and very unfit for a perſon in your ſituation.

"I ſee," ſaid Dubois, who was looking very anxiouſly at his father, "you are afraid I ſhall be retaken."

Rhubarbin declared there did not exiſt a doubt now, of his being honourably acquitted, but he wiſhed he had a more convenient apartment, and aſked him if he thought he ſhould

ſhould be able to travel a little way, to the ſeat of a friend of his in the neighbourhood.

Dubois begged to know whereabouts, as he had never heard him mention having any acquaintance in that province.

The Apothecary told him it was a gentleman he had very lately got acquainted with, the perſon who had viſited him in priſon, who having heard of his flight, had made him this offer, having a very fine ſeat within five leagues, and he is there now, ready to receive us; I expect his carriage every moment.

This puzzled the young man exceſſively; this gentleman was evidently at Paris when Rhubarbin received his letter, and muſt have left Paris with the Apothecary, to be arrived at his ſeat already. However, he kept theſe reflections to himſelf, and aſſured the Apothecary, he wiſhed to be guided totally by him. He was able to get up, he believed: indeed, the idea of leaving this houſe, which

was very little better than his priſon, gave him ſtrength, and a few hours ſleep, which he ſoon got, after taking ſome medicine, greatly recruited his ſpirits, which the arrival of his father had very much increaſed. Rhubarbin not having choſe to ſatisfy him, while in priſon, who this gentleman was, he would not put the queſtion a ſecond time.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the Preſident arrived in his carriage, and was very impatiently inquiring for the young man who was there, when Rhubarbin having heard a carriage ſtop, ran down ſtairs, and in his haſte, had like to have diſcloſed the ſecret, for there were plenty of bye-ſtanders, admiring the elegance of the coach. The Preſident's anxiety had not got the better of his prudence, he ſtopt Rhubarbin, and they walked to a diſtance in the ſtreet, where he made his anxious inquiries. The Apothecary's anſwers were more favourable than he dared to have hoped, as he aſſured him what he had taken, and the aſſurances he had given him, had

had already occaſioned a conſiderable alteration for the better.

This conſoling news quite revived the Preſident, who ſaid he had come provided with every thing neceſſary, if he thought there would not be any danger in moving his patient.

Rhubarbin ſaid he had already informed him he expected a friend, and he agreed to be removed wherever he choſe, which he hoped might be effected without danger.

The Preſident ſaid he had got plenty of pillows in the carriage, for it was all croſs roads to his ſeat, and they were very rough; but they would take their time. The horſes were ordered to take a ſhort bait, during which time Rhubarbin returned to his patient, told him his friend was arrived, and got him up.

The Preſident's impatience would not allow him to wait below, he ſoon knocked at the door, ſaying, it is only me, and was inſtantly admitted. He had compoſed his countenance, but felt great difficulty in concealing his emotion, when he ſaw his dear fugitive; he tried to joke, by making compariſons between the two apartments; obſerved he had been very unfortunate; had he thought he had retained any fears, after the aſſurances his father had given him in the Conciergerie, he would have paid him another viſit, and have convinced him how groundleſs they were. Mr. Rhubarbin had employed him to trace his unfortunate affair to the bottom, and he was at a certainty he would get out of it with honour. Theſe aſſurances the Preſident thought neceſſary to his ſon's recovery.

The young man thanked him very politely, for the trouble he had taken, but a ſervant coming to inform them the carriage was ready, they walked down ſtairs, Mr. Rhubarbin

barbin having paid very honourably for the trouble his ſon had given, and made a handſome preſent to the curate.

They all got into the coach; but notwithſtanding all the Preſident's, and his Lady's precautions, the movement of the carriage in theſe horrid roads, was too much for the young man, he fainted ſeveral times, though they went very ſlow. The Preſident was half wild with his fears, though he did all in his power to conceal them; but his ſon was too ill to attend to his emotion.

They arrived about nine in the evening, he was much worſe than when they ſet out, exceſſively fatigued, and almoſt inſenſible, though the Preſident and Apothecary had done all in their power to keep up his ſpirits. He was not able to walk, but was carried up ſtairs, and immediately put to bed in a room which was already prepared for him. Madame La Preſidente was obliged to be ſupported into her own room, ſo much was ſhe

ſhocked to ſee her darling ſon ſo ill; and the comfort both ſhe and her huſband felt, at having this long loſt child at laſt under their roof, was greatly damped by the ſituation he was in, though theſe tender parents were, by no means, aware of the abſolute danger of it.

The moment they arrived, Rhubarbin intreated he might be left alone with his patient, or at moſt, with only one ſervant, fearful they might be alarmed more than was neceſſary. He was right in theſe precautions, for the young man fell into a fit as ſoon as his head was laid upon his pillow, and Rhubarbin himſelf was exceſſively frightened; had it been any other patient, his hopes would have been much ſtronger; but he thought his dear Dubois would never open his eyes again. He remained in this lifeleſs ſtate for ſome hours, and Rhubarbin began to be fearful of concealing the real danger he thought him in. Madame La Preſidente was ſo anxious to ſee her ſon, that at laſt ſhe was admitted, and was ſtanding at his bed's head pale and bathed

bathed in tears, when her darling ſon opened his eyes, and fixed them upon her face. This gave her inexpreſſible joy; ſhe aſked him how he did, with ſuch emotion, that Dubois was ſurpriſed, but anſwered, he felt himſelf much better. He then looked round him, and ſaw Rhubarbin, to whom he put out his hand, ſeeing he had been in tears, ſaying, "I am afraid I have alarmed you, my dear father, I am much better now, I aſſure you."

The Apothecary took the proffered hand in one of his, and with his other felt his pulſe.

"Oh come, my dear ſon," ſaid he, "you will do very well, but you muſt not talk," giving Madame La Preſidente a look, ſhe immediately left the room, and the ſervant was ſent for ſome broth.

The young man's eyes followed the lady, who ſeemed ſo intereſted for him, and he looked at Rhubarbin for an explanation, but he took no ſort of notice, only entreated him

to

to compoſe himſelf, and to lay very ſtill. This was hardly a neceſſary precaution in his weak ſtate, he could ſcarcely do otherwiſe. He was not inclined to reſt, but lay looking round him, amazed at the magnificence of his apartment. This was much ſuperior to any one he had ſeen at St. * * *. This caſtle, which he had juſt remarked as he was brought in, ſeemed much larger than Mr. de Ceare's.

Rhubarbin finding he did not reſt, propoſed his taking ſome more medicine; he did ſo, to oblige the anxious Apothecary, and thought he would venture one queſtion more, ſo much was he puzzled in his own mind.

"Pray, my dear father, where are we? and who are theſe worthy people we are under ſuch obligations to? particularly that Lady, whom I ſaw by my bedſide?"

Rhubarbin was never more at a loſs; he wiſhed him to be ſatisfied in ſome reſpects; however,

however, he cut all his queſtions as ſhort as he poſſibly could, ſaying, "My dear child, we are in L'Orleannois, with a particular friend of mine; the gentleman is a very great lawyer, I employed him in your affair, and the lady you remarked, is his wife; ſhe has got a ſon much about your age, and ſhe has juſt learned he is very ill, therefore, your ſituation affected her the more."

"I pity the good Lady ſincerely," ſaid Dubois, "ſhe ſeems very amiable."

"You abſolutely muſt not talk any more," ſaid the Apothecary, drawing the curtains of the bed.

Though Dubois was not perfectly ſatisfied, he was in a great degree, and got ſome reſt; but he felt very little benefit from it, the next evening his fever increaſed. His anxious mother not being allowed to go into her ſon's room, was at the door herſelf, or ſending every half hour, to know how he did. The Apothecary

Apothecary always made the beſt of his ſituation, as may be ſuppoſed, but at laſt his own fears overcame him, in a fit of deſpair he went down to the Preſident and his wife, to announce the woeful tidings. He declared their ſon was in the utmoſt danger; his tears flowing in abundance while he ſpoke. The father and mother gave way to the moſt bitter ſorrow.

"Did he think there were no hopes?"

"Nothing but the excellence of his conſtitution could ſave him," ſaid the Apothecary.

"Alas!" ſaid the Preſident to his afflicted wife, "we muſt put our truſt in the Giver of all Goodneſs, he alone can reſtore our ſon to health."

"And muſt we loſe our child for ever?" ſaid the fond mother, "at the moment he is almoſt miraculouſly reſtored to our arms."

She

She would have ſaid more, but her tears choaked her utterance.

The Apothecary wanted to have had other medical aſſiſtance called in, but this they would not hear of; they would truſt wholly to his ſkill, ſince their ſon was ſo dear to him; he could ſave him if it was in the power of medicine; he knew his complaint, and was thoroughly acquainted with his conſtitution; another thing which the Preſident ſaid had great weight with him in his ſon's weak ſtate, was the alarm it might occaſion, introducing a ſtranger to him, circumſtanced as he was.

Madame La Preſidente was quite of her huſband's opinion, ſaying, Rhubarbin himſelf would have been of their way of thinking, before the danger was ſo great.

The Apothecary bowed in ſilence, and ſaid, "Thank God he had preſerved his ſenſes, and

and was certainly very anxious when any body came in, or left his room."

From the first day, only one servant had ever entered it, to wait upon the Apothecary, who acted in the double capacity of Physician and nurse, and once a day or so, the President and his wife had been allowed to visit their son; but now, as the danger increased, they would both watch over him; his seeing them, and receiving fresh declarations of his being declared innocent, might have more weight with him than coming from Rhubarbin, and from this time, either one or other was constantly at his bedside; at the Apothecary's particular request, they seldom addressed him, and only saw him at intervals; but it was a great gratification to hear him when he spoke. At the end of three days all their hopes were revived, Dubois began to mend apace, thanks to the excellent care that had been taken of him, and his own natural good constitution.

He

He had often remarked the attentions of his father and mother, but took no notice to the Apothecary, nor ever mentioned his unfortunate adventure, though it uſually lay uppermoſt in his thoughts.

His friends alſo thought it moſt prudent not to ſtart ſo diſagreeable a ſubject, 'till he was better able to bear its being canvaſſed over without emotion; the ſame reaſons alſo made them forbear diſcloſing the ſecret of his birth to him, as Rhubarbin had repeatedly declared ſuch a diſcovery, in his weak ſtate, might be attended with the worſt conſequences; and as Rhubarbin had been ſo fortunate as to reſtore their ſon to health by his ſkill and attendance, they conformed ſtrictly to his wiſhes; but though they obeyed him in this point, they could not be prevailed upon to leave his room, and the fond mother, as he grew better, would preſent her ſon with every thing he took, as ſhe was convinced he was flattered by theſe proofs of the intereſt ſhe took in his recovery. When he

ſpoke,

ſpoke, ſhe liſtened to him in ecſtacies, and when he looked another way, ſhe gazed upon him in raptures. The more Dubois ſaw of her, the more he felt her extreme kindneſs towards him; he always treated her with the utmoſt reſpect, and was infinitely gratified by her conſtant attendance.

One day as ſhe was ſitting by his bedſide, after he was much better, giving him ſomething to drink, while her eyes were fixed upon him in the moſt affectionate manner, he looked at her in his turn, and wiſhed to convince her how much he felt the obligations ſhe had laid him under; he therefore began to thank her, in the politeſt manner; but ſhe, apprehending it might hurt him to talk ſo much, begged he would defer all compliments 'till he was perfectly recovered: but he continued talking, ſaying, "thanks to her goodneſs, he was all but in perfect health," ſhe raiſed her hand, and put it before his mouth, to prevent his going on, though ſhe liſtened

with

with ſuch pleaſure to his diſcourſe; tears of joy were now trickling down her cheeks.

This freſh proof of the amiable woman's regard for him, melted the ſoul of her ſon, and without knowing what he did, he impreſt a tender kiſs upon the hand which cloſed his mouth. He inſtantly reflected upon the unpardonable liberty he thought he had taken with his benefactreſs; convinced ſhe was a perſon of great conſequence, he was afraid to look her in the face, for fear of diſcovering ſome marks of her diſpleaſure, and could not think of any terms ſufficiently ſtrong, to expreſs his repentance; at laſt he ventured to raiſe his eyes, and met thoſe he ſo much dreaded.

His mother's tears flowed faſter than before, and her countenance expreſſed the moſt tender affection; ſhe took the hand next her, and preſt it in her own, ſaying,

"Oh

" Oh my dear child, only get well, and you will ſave the lives of a great many."

Dubois's ſurpriſe increaſed; " What can all this mean," ſaid he, " this good lady has certainly loſt her ſon, or ſhe thought, while ſhe was talking to me, ſhe was addreſſing him."

But Rhubarbin, who was near enough to hear what had paſſed, immediately interrupted the diſcourſe, for fear the young man ſhould have diſcovered who he was, before he intended; he therefore told Madame La Preſidente his patient wanted reſt; what he had been taking, required him to be kept remarkably quiet; upon which his mother left the room, and the Apothecary, to avoid entering into diſcourſe with Dubois, followed her, leaving only the footman, who always attended with the young man.

The Preſident, ſeeing his wife had been in tears, was exceſſively alarmed when ſhe entered

tered the ſaloon; but his fears were very ſoon diſſipated; "Oh our dear child will do very well, my dear huſband; he has been thanking me ſo much for our care of him, I was quite affected, I could not make myſelf known to him."

Rhubarbin ſaid it would have been highly imprudent, but he was happy to ſay, he could be anſwerable now for his recovery.

This conſoling declaration, from a man in whoſe ſkill they placed the higheſt confidence, poured balm into the ſoul of theſe doating parents; they were not able to expreſs their joy or their gratitude to the Apothecary, whoſe former errors were quite forgot in his recent ſervices.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

THE alarms for ſo precious a life having ceaſed, the Preſident began to think of effecting an accommodation between the Apothecary and his couſin, and as a preliminary ſtep towards this matter, he thought of ſending for her to his caſtle, as he ſhould not be able to explain his wiſhes in writing; beſides the danger of ſuch a ſtep; for he was not acquainted with her diſpoſition; if he ſaw her, he had little doubt of accomplifhing his deſign, and of bringing her into his way of thinking;

thinking; but by writing to her, all his plans would be overturned, if ſhe was mercenary. She might ſhew the letter, and have advice how to proceed; and the lawyers, for the ſake of handling ſome part of her large fortune, would not fail to embrouillé the affair; he therefore wrote a letter to the commandant of Montpellier, where ſhe reſided, and who happened to be an intimate friend of his, but without explaining any thing even to him; he merely entreated he would ſee that this woman ſet out for Orleans immediately, begging he would provide her with a good carriage, and furniſh her with what money would be neceſſary for her journey, deſiring he would draw upon him for the amount; and as ſhe might find it rather awkward travelling alone, particularly with poſt horſes, he wiſhed he could get ſome perſon to accompany her, either as a companion, or a ſervant; the additional expence was not any object; he only entreated he would ſend her off as ſoon as poſſible.

The receipt of this letter rather puzzled the commandant, but he could not aſk any explanation, and he wiſhed, of all things, to oblige the Preſident. He therefore ſet about inquiring for the lady, whom he was not acquainted with.

The poor couſin, who got her livelihood by making lace, (though Dubois always allowed her five and twenty pounds a year, unknown to his father) was very much ſurpriſed when ſhe was ſent for by the commandant; but after her firſt amazement had rather abated, ſhe preſumed Madame wiſhed to employ her in her way of buſineſs; ſhe therefore, adorned in her beſt cap and lappets, of her own making, as a proof of her talents, ſet out for the Commandant's; but what was her aſtoniſhment, when the Commandant informed her why he had ſent for her. Without much heſitation, ſhe ſaid ſhe was at the commands of Monſeigneur, ſo the Commandant deſired ſhe would get ready to ſet off the next morning early, intending to ſend her

her in a carriage of his own, with one of his ſervants to attend her.

She looked very anxiouſly at the Commandant, wondering what all this could mean, but was too much awed, by his ſuperior rank, to aſk any explanation, which he was not ſorry for, as he would have been mortified not to have been thought in the ſecret. She therefore left Montpellier, quite ignorant of the motive of her journey. The Commandant only told her ſome friends of his would meet her at Orleans.

As ſoon as the Commandant had ſettled how ſhe was to go, he diſpatched a letter expreſs to the Preſident, to inform him when he might expect her, and how ſhe was to travel; it arrived in time, he diſpatched one of his wife's women in their coach, to meet her at the poſt-houſe at Orleans, on the day ſhe was expected. The coach got there juſt after her arrival, and the poor couſin was more and more aſtoniſhed when ſhe ſaw the

lady, as ſhe thought, from the elegant equipage, dreſs, &c. who was come to meet her.

The maid delivered a meſſage to her from the Preſident, entreating ſhe would accompany her to his flat, which was very near, as he had ſomething of the utmoſt importance to communicate to her, which he could not truſt to paper; he had therefore ſent for her, not being able to undertake a journey to Montpellier himſelf, juſt then.

The poor frightened provincial readily agreed to accompany the bearer of this polite meſſage, wondering why ſo great a man ſhould take ſo much trouble about her, and how he came to ſend for her in ſuch a ſtyle. She now fretted very much her dreſs did not coincide rather more with the vehicle ſhe was going to travel in. She had got her beſt lace cap with her, but it was packed up, and ſhe had not been uſed to travelling, or to dreſs at an Inn. She made a vaſt many apologies, and her ſcruples being over-ruled, they

they ſoon ſet off, and arrived before dinner at the Preſident's caſtle, which, as we have before obſerved, was remarkable for its fine ſituation, ſize, and the magnificence with which it was furniſhed.

Madame La Preſidente came down to meet her, and received her with the utmoſt politeneſs; led her into her own apartments, where ſeveral ſorts of refreſhments were inſtantly ſet before the aſtoniſhed provincial, who, flattered as ſhe felt herſelf, by the politeneſs a lady, ſo evidently her ſuperior, treated her with, was by no means at her eaſe in ſuch a houſe, and in ſuch company.

Having given her time to recruit her ſpirits after her journey, the Preſident entered his wife's dreſſing room, and addreſſed her with his accuſtomed eaſe and politeneſs. He perceived her confuſion, and before he entered upon buſineſs, began to talk to her about her journey, his friend the Commandant, and at laſt finding ſhe had rather recovered

from the confuſion his entrance had thrown her into, he ſaid he had ſent for her to inform her of a matter of great importance to her future welfare. The Preſident allowed her time to breathe before he went on, ſaying, he preſumed ſhe knew, that in caſe Mr. Rhubarbin's ſon died before he was of age, his fortune reverted to her? he knew ſhe was perfectly acquainted with this circumſtance, as the Apothecary had told him his wife had ſent her a copy of her will before ſhe died, with an inventory of all ſhe was worth.

She looked exceſſively ſurpriſed while the Preſident was ſpeaking, and when he had concluded, ſaid, in a very anxious voice,

"She hoped her couſin had not met with any accident."

The Preſident, without anſwering her queſtion, ſaid, "ſhe was now ſole heir to all Madame Rhubarbin's vaſt poſſeſſions."

Upon

Upon hearing this, the provincial burſt into a violent flood of tears, not occaſioned by the joy her recent acquiſitions gave her, but really by the ſorrow ſhe felt for the ſuppoſed death of Dubois, whom ſhe had known very intimately during his reſidence at Montpellier, who had not only very often viſited her, but ſettled the penſion already mentioned, upon her, beſides making her ſeveral very handſome preſents. She therefore, far from wiſhing for his death, only hoped he would live to enjoy the fortune his mother had left him, which ſhe was certain he would make an excellent uſe of. She repeated all this to the Preſident, and lamented his loſs in the ſincereſt terms, her tears adding weight to her words.

Theſe freſh proofs of their ſon's generoſity, delighted both the Preſident and his wife: could there be any thing more flattering to a tender father and mother, than to find their ſon's ſuppoſed death thus regretted, even by the perſon whom it raiſed from a

ſtate of dependancy to the greateſt affluence. The Preſident conſoled her, ſaying, "though her ſorrow had convinced him of the excellency of her heart, he was ſorry his ambiguous terms had occaſioned it;" he therefore, after ſome preparation, told her the whole ſtory, concluding with ſaying, "that as he now knew how much Mr. Rhubarbin was in her power, he hoped ſhe would be as generous to him, as his ſuppoſed ſon had been to her, for the ſake of this dear Dubois, ſhe profeſſed ſuch friendſhip for."

She had liſtened to his narrative with the utmoſt attention, and ſeemed particularly happy that the object of her regret was ſtill in the land of the living. She told the Preſident, that ſhe had a very great regard for Mr. Rhubarbin, who had always treated her like a brother, during his wife's life time, whom ſhe confeſſed was one of the worſt tempered women in the world; ſhe was therefore ready to agree to any arrangement

they

they would be ſo obliging as to point out, that might be ſerviceable to him.

Madame La Preſidente thanked her for her generous offer, "that ſhe was convinced ſhe never would repent of any thing ſhe did for ſo good a man as the Apothecary."

"She was exceedingly happy her wiſhes met with the approbation of people of ſuch diſtinction, and ſhe ſhould be exceſſively proud to be totally guided by their excellent advice in the buſineſs;" and ſeeing a pen and ink and ſome paper, upon a little table Madame La Preſidente was writing at when ſhe arrived, ſhe got up, and taking the pen, ſigned her name at the bottom of one of the ſheets of paper, which ſhe gave the Preſident, ſaying,

"May I beg, my Lord, you would fill that up as you think beſt, for the advantage of both parties."

The Preſident and his wife were exceſſively pleaſed with her generous frankneſs, and with the confidence ſhe placed in them, which the reſident aſſured her ſhe ſhould never have reaſon to repent.

He then told her the Apothecary was at the caſtle, as he ſtill attended upon his ſon, who though much better, could not leave his apartment, nor hardly his bed yet, and aſked her if ſhe ſhould like to ſee Rhubarbin.

" Oh by all means."

The kindneſs the Preſident and his wife treated her with, had quite raiſed her ſpirits, and ſhe had forgot her dreſs. The Apothecary was ſent for; he ſoon made his appearance, apparently exceſſively confuſed, but his good couſin ſoon removed his embarraſſment, by running up to him, and embracing him in the moſt affectionate manner, telling

telling him, ſhe knew all, and what ſhe had done.

The Apothecary was greatly relieved by theſe proofs of her kindneſs, and the good ſoul, to change the diſcourſe, aſked very reſpectively, "if ſhe might be permitted to ſee the young gentleman, ſhe no longer dare call couſin; but ſhe knew he would be glad to ſee her, notwithſtanding what had happened."

"The Preſident ſaid he was convinced her viſit would make him very happy, but he muſt be prepared for it. I muſt only entreat you will continue to treat him as your couſin, for he is totally unacquainted with his rank as yet; though, as you very juſtly obſerve, I am certain this alteration in his circumſtances will not produce any change in his ſentiments of affection for you and his ſuppoſed father."

Rhubarbin, highly pleaſed that the meeting he ſo much dreaded, was over, left them,

to announce the couſin's arrival to his beloved patient, ſaying, "he ſhould invent ſome ſtory," which he juſt gave them the heads of, "to account for her having undertaken this journey."

He ſoon ſent them word Dubois waited very impatiently for his couſin's viſit. Madame La Preſidente conducted her into her ſon's apartment: he was very happy to ſee her, and his mother retired, not wiſhing to interrupt the converſation between theſe ſuppoſed relations.

Dubois told his couſin he had been very much ſurpriſed when he learnt her arrival. She gave him the reaſons the Apothecary had alledged for her journey, ſaying, that having heard of his illneſs, and where he was, by a letter ſhe had received from his father, before ſhe left Montpellier, therefore ſhe could not think of returning without ſeeing him.

Whil-

While ſhe and Dubois were thus engaged, the Preſident and his Lady were telling Rhubarbin all that had paſſed between them and his relation. "You perceive you need not fear a law ſuit," ſaid the Preſident, "and I proteſt, I think the beſt way of ſettling the buſineſs, as ſhe is very agreeable, and ſtill a handſome woman, will be to offer her your hand, by which means the fortune will be in common between you."

Rhubarbin looked rather ſurpriſed, but ſaid, after a moment's pauſe, "he liked the Preſident's propoſal of all things, and wiſhed they would add, to the other favours they had conferred upon him, by prevailing upon her to accept of his hand."

Madame La Preſidente ſaid ſhe would break the ice for him, which ſhe did a few days afterwards, by mentioning Mr. Rhubarbin in very flattering terms to the Provincial, and expreſſing her wiſhes ſhe would conſent

conſent to a union he moſt earneſtly hoped for.

Rhubarbin's couſin was rather flattered by theſe propoſals, and as ſhe had promiſed to be totally guided by my Lord and her Ladyſhip's wiſhes readily conſented to accept of the Apothecary's hand.

Rhubarbin was informed of his happineſs, and took an early opportunity of thanking his couſin very much for her condeſcenſion, proteſting it ſhould be the whole ſtudy of his life to promote her felicity in every ſhape.

The Preſident was to give inſtructions concerning the ſettlements; the Provincial only entreated that their fortune might be ſecured to their ſuppoſed relation at their deaths.

The Preſident laughed, and ſaid, "ſhe was very good, but he muſt add that clauſe, in caſe they had no children."

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The Apothecary was pleaſed, and ſa'd, "who knows what may happen." His intended bride bluſhed a little, and Madame La Preſidente now adviſed them to have the ceremony performed immediately; but the bride elect entreated it might be put off 'till the ſick gentleman was ſufficiently recovered to attend at it, as neither ſhe nor Mr. Rhubarbin could enjoy any pleaſure, if he was not of the party. This was too excellent a reaſon to meet with any oppoſition, ſo they reciprocally paſſed their words, and executed the ſettlements.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

DUBOIS was now recovering daily, and had he been leſs beloved, they would no longer have poſtponed informing him of his birth; but it was decided he ſhould not be made acquainted with his rank 'till he was perfectly recovered. But he already bore the name of Count de St. Blancard in the houſe, which was the name of a remarkable fine ſeat his father had in Provence, that he meant to ſettle upon his ſon, the revenues of which

which were immenſe; and this was the name the Preſident bore when he married Mademoiſelle d'Orville, which made both him and his wife partial to it.

While Dubois was ill, his thoughts (which indeed by no means accelerated his recovery) conſtantly rolled upon Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and his love increaſed with his returning ſtrength. He longed to know what had happened to her during his confinement, and his father was the only perſon he could apply to for information upon this head.

When the couſin arrived, he had ſome thoughts of employing her to make inquiries for him; but ſhe knew very little about Paris, and was not a very proper perſon to interfere in ſuch an affair; ſo at laſt he came to a reſolution to queſtion Rhubarbin, which he accordingly did a few days after his Couſin's arrival.

Rhubarbin

Rhubarbin told him, that the ſame decree which had declared him innocent, ſome few days after he had left Paris, had alſo juſtified the young lady.

This agreeable news tranquillized him very much, and contributed more than any thing to his perfect cure. The young man longed to have aſked him many more queſtions, but he always obſerved a ſort of embarraſſment about his ſuppoſed father, which prevented him, though it increaſed his doubts.

The Preſident's long abſence from Paris, juſt at this important juncture, ſurpriſed Monſieur de Ceare exceſſively, particularly when he reflected upon the confidence he had placed in him concerning his animoſity againſt the Apothecary and his ſon. However, the Preſident finding his ſon recovering ſo faſt, now thought of going to Paris, to ſatisfy the uneaſineſs of the Maſter of Requeſts, who had wrote to him ſeveral times; and if he had not been confined by the gout

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in his feet, would certainly have waited upon him in perſon, to conſult with him upon the moſt probable means of diſcovering the fugitive, or at leaſt to hurry on the trial, which would, at all events, prevent his ever returning to France, was he condemned; and a decree of this kind would have ſatisfied him, ſince he had begun to loſe his hopes of retaking him, as it would diſhonour both father and ſon.

But the Preſident had never been exactly of Mr. de Ceare's way of thinking; nay, had even been hurt at the violent animoſity, and ſpirit of revenge he always profeſſed; and it may be ſuppoſed, his conduct appeared in an infinite worſe light to him, now that he viewed the affair in a very different manner; indeed he was now as prejudiced againſt Champagne and Monſieur de Ceare, as he had been againſt the unfortunate Dubois, of whoſe innocence he was now certain; he therefore only wiſhed to convince the world of this important truth. Once he thought of informing

informing the Master of Requests of the discovery this adventure had occasioned, but that notion did not please him, upon second consideration. He therefore set out alone for Paris, determined, in the first place, to have Champagne taken up, convinced his evidence was totally false; for in fact, his son was not more justified now, than he was at the moment of his flight, though the young man had been led to believe he was, by Rhubarbin, by way of accelerating his cure.

During his journey, the President reflected upon the strange business his son was involved in, and was more and more convinced there was something very black at the bottom, which he must bring to light, through this Champagne, if possible. He was also convinced the Count was very much in love with Mademoiselle de Ceare; he had saved her life twice, and the last time at the eminent risk of his own; yet notwithstanding all this, Mr. de Ceare was endeavouring, by every exertion of his interest

reſt and power, to bring him to a ſcaffold. This conduct really ſurpriſed him, now he ſaw the matter in a fair light.

He arrived at Paris late in the evening, and very early the next morning he ſent an order to have Champagne brought before him immediately. Upon the return of his ſecretary, he learnt that the wretch (who had been removed to a private lodging, upon account of his wound) could not be taken out of bed, but at the eminent riſk of his life. The Preſident therefore proceeded on foot to the houſe where the raſcal lay, having ſent for two of his intimate friends, whom he deſired would join him there, which they inſtantly did; and without explaining to them the reaſons of his application, he merely ſaid, he wiſhed them to be witneſſes of his examination of a young man who lay ill in that houſe, to which they readily aſſented. But before he went into the vile wretches room, he wiſhed to ſee the Surgeon who attended him. The diſciple of St. Come ſoon obeyed

ed the ſummons, and upon being queſtioned by the Preſident, ſaid, when he left his patient over night, he did not entertain any hopes of his recovery.

The Preſident was rather ſurpriſed, as 'till that morning he never underſtood the villain was in any danger; but deſired the Surgeon would go into his room, and bring them word how he found him. The man ſoon returned, ſaying, he was as he expected would be the caſe, much worſe, and there did not remain the ſhadow of a hope of his recovery, his wound having been neglected when he firſt received it, and having over-heated his blood immediately, by the ſpeed with which he had rode to Paris, rendered a cure impoſſible, ſince the unfortunate turn his diſorder had taken; and he did not think it poſſible he could live many days, if he did 'till the next, for the mortification gained ground every minute.

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The Preſident now aſked the Surgeon, if he had acquainted his patient with the danger he was in.

He replied he had not, as they always put that diſagreeable taſk off 'till the laſt moment.

The Preſident therefore deſired he would return to the ſick man, and inform him of his ſituation, as it was of the utmoſt conſequence he ſhould be appriſed of his danger in time; and deſired he would alſo let him know he was there, to receive his laſt depoſition, as he moſt probably would not live 'till the trial could be reſumed.

The Surgeon ſaid no more, but proceeded up ſtairs again. The Preſident, his two friends, the maſter of the houſe, whom he deſired would attend, and the Secretary, with pen, ink and paper, to receive the wretch's deciſive evidence, ſoon followed him into the dying man's room, who lay trembling with horror

horror at the thoughts of his approaching diſſolution.

The Preſident repeated what he had ordered the Surgeon to tell him, reſpecting his viſit, deſiring he would now recapitulate the charges he had brought againſt Dubois, in preſence of thoſe noblemen, meaning his friends, and the other witneſſes; bidding him recollect he was on the verge of eternity, therefore, as he hoped for mercy or ſalvation, he adviſed him to be cautious, not to let any thing eſcape his lips, but what he could be anſwerable for at the great tribunal he would ſo ſoon be ſummoned to appear before; adding, that Mademoiſelle de Ceare, as well as Dubois, proteſted his late depoſition was falſe in every article, and both agreed he was culpable of the very crimes he wiſhed to affix upon the unfortunate young Phyſician.

The miſerable wretch wept aloud during this ſolemn exhortation, and when the Preſident concluded, he wrung his hands, ſaying, he

he neither dare hope for mercy in heaven nor on earth, for he had deceived both the Preſident and Mr. de Ceare, having taken a very falſe oath, and told them both a parcel of lies, all of his own wicked invention.

The Preſident, whoſe heart was now perfectly at eaſe, ſaid, he ſuſpected his veracity from the firſt, and had intended, when the trial came on, to have convinced him he could not deceive him, but deſired now he would declare the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, if he hoped for any favour.

After ſobbing and praying aloud for a few minutes, during which he was not interrupted, he began and told the whole ſtory, exactly as it had happened, to the beſt of his recollection, and called upon his Maker to witneſs the truth of every word he had ſaid.

This confeſſion perfectly juſtified both Dubois and Mademoiſelle de Ceare, as it was perfectly conformable to what they had both

alledged. All the bye-ſtanders were ſhocked to think a perſon in cold blood could be ſo premeditately wicked.

After the now ſincere penitent had ſigned what the Secretary had wrote, he begged pardon of the Preſident, and all the company then preſent, and entreated he might be permitted to ſee this excellent young lady, that he might alſo implore her forgiveneſs.

This, the Preſident ſaid, was more than he could promiſe him, and he thought he ought to thank heaven, that his ſpeedy diſſolution would moſt likely prevent her and Dubois from revenging themſelves upon him, for the danger they both had ran, adding, he preſumed he knew that he now ſtood in the very ſame predicament that unfortunate young man had done, through his calumnies, therefore, he adviſed him to ſee no perſon but his Confeſſor and Surgeon, while he did live, aſſuring him he would himſelf (ſo willing was he to extend his clemency, even to the undeſerving,

ſerving, and it is to be ſuppoſed he felt but little pity for the wretch before him) conceal his depoſition from Mr. de Ceare and his daughter, 'till after his death, that they might not inſiſt upon his finiſhing his life upon that ſcaffold, he had vainly endeavoured to bring Dubois to.

The bed ſhook, and the miſerable being hid his face with the bed clothes. The Preſident and his friends now left the room, after this worthy Judge had entreated they would not, and alſo the maſter of the houſe, nor the Surgeon, would mention a word of what had paſſed, 'till they heard from him again. They all readily promiſed to acquieſce with his wiſhes, and he took leave of the noblemen who had favoured him with their company, as they left the houſe.

As he now wiſhed to ſee Mr. de Ceare and his daughter, he immediately proceeded to the Maſter of Requeſts, who was ſtill confined with the gout. He was exceſſively

happy to ſee the Preſident, who did not ſtand preciſely in the ſame predicament with regard to him.

After the uſual compliments, the Preſident ſaid, "he wiſhed to ſee Mademoiſelle de Ceare, her depoſition never having been properly taken."

The Maſter of Requeſts, who was afraid what ſhe would ſay, might invalidate Champagne's evidence, hardly reliſhed this propoſal: by way of eluding it, he aſked the Preſident "if there was any news of the priſoner."

The Preſident ſaid very coolly, "he might depend upon having juſtice done him, wherever the priſoner was."

Mr. de Ceare then reverted to the odd way in which Dubois had made his eſcape, begging to know whether the Preſident did not think he had acted rather imprudently in having

having him removed, and allowing his irons to be knocked off, becauſe he pretended to be ill, merely to excite pity.

"Criminal or not, ſir," ſaid the Preſident, very haughtily, "neither you nor I had a right to advance the moment of the young man's death, before he was condemned, which muſt have been the conſequence of his remaining in irons, and in a dungeon, dangerouſly ill, as he was, whatever you may have heard to the contrary. But that is not what I came to talk about, ſir; it is neceſſary I ſhould ſee Mademoiſelle de Ceare; where is ſhe?"

The Maſter of Requeſts plainly perceived ſomething he had ſaid hurt the Preſident, whom he by no means wiſhed to offend, he therefore told him, he would give him an order to ſee her in the Convent, where ſhe ſtill was, if he would be ſo obliging as to take the trouble of going there, as he was not ſure, having had but a very bad account of her

health, whether ſhe would be able to come out, was he to ſend for her.

" I do not much wonder the young lady is indiſpoſed, all things conſidered; but if you will make out my credentials, I will do myſelf the pleaſure of waiting upon her immediately."

Mr. de Ceare called for pen and ink, and wrote the order, without aſking any further explanation. As ſoon as he had concluded, he preſented it to the Preſident, who put it into his pocket, without ſpeaking, and making a very diſtant bow, took his leave of Mr. de Ceare, who was half petrified by the cool politeneſs with which he had treated and left him.

The Preſident ſoon arrived at the Convent, as his carriage, according to the orders he had given his Secretary, had followed him to Mr. de Ceare's. He deſired to ſpeak with the ſuperior, to whom he gave the order he

was

was the bearer of, entreating ſhe would ſend the young lady alone to the grate of her parlour, as his buſineſs with her was of a private nature.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſoon made her appearance, as the name of the Preſident de Ranſal, and the order he was the bearer of, prevented the amiable ſuperior from forming, or even daring to hazard a ſingle objection.

The Preſident was very much ſtruck as ſhe advanced, with her beauty and elegance, though he plainly perceived a ſort of ſettled melancholy predominant upon her lovely countenance. When he mentioned the name of Dubois, and the buſineſs he was come upon, ſhe burſt into tears, and was ſome time before ſhe could ſpeak. The Preſident was very much affected, and could willingly have mingled his tears with her's.

When ſhe recovered her voice, ſhe proteſted the young Phyſician was innocent, in

the ſtrongeſt terms, adding, I entreat your Lordſhip would not let the unfortunate paſſion, I believe he feels for the miſerable object before you, have any weight with you in this caſe. That our meeting was purely accidental, I here atteſt before that God, who alone can read in all our hearts; though I acknowledge I left my father's houſe, to avoid a marriage with a man I abhorred: ſtill I ſolemnly proteſt, and ſhall to my laſt moment, his innocence; and if Dubois ſuffers, I am confident I ſhall not ſurvive him.

Here another violent flood of tears, in which the Preſident was near joining, again ſtopped her utterance. When ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe caſt a moſt imploring look upon the Preſident, and thus proceeded.

As I hope for ſalvation, my Lord, I neither ſaw, nor correſponded with the unfortunate young man, ſince he left Paris for Italy; nor did I know he was upon his return, and ſincerely wiſh, (perceiving the Preſident was

now

now really in tears, he could no longer reſtrain) ſhe pauſed for a moment——I can aſſure your Lordſhip I am ſpeaking the real truth; to diſguiſe my ſentiments would be of little avail now; but I ſincerely wiſh that I had fallen a victim to the perfidy of the villainous Champagne. Oh, Dubois, why were you ſo near—or rather, why did your natural courage and generoſity prompt you to hazard your life in defence of one, whoſe father thirſts after your blood?

The Preſident, who was delighted to find Mademoiſelle de Ceare ſo worthy of his ſon's love, entreated ſhe would calm her agitated ſpirits, and relate to him the whole ſtory, as near as ſhe could recollect, begging ſhe would favour him with a pen and ink, and that ſhe would deſire, in his name, the ſuperior, and two of the elder nuns, would attend during her recital, as her depoſition would be greatly conduſive to the proving the young man in queſtion innocent of the vile charges brought againſt him.

All this ſhe readily complied with, happy to have it in her power to prove his innocence, and her attachment to the unfortunate young phyſician. She therefore immediately went to inform the ſuperior, who dared not make any oppoſition to what the Preſident requeſted; beſides, ſhe was ſecretly flattered at the thoughts of Mr. de Ceare's daughter expoſing her own reputation to ſave her lover.

The hopes Mademoiſelle de Ceare now entertained, ſo raiſed her ſpirits, that ſhe, with the greateſt firmneſs, and an air of innocence and veracity, which muſt have given weight to her words, even had they been addreſſed to the moſt prejudiced judge, took up her ſtory from her firſt ſeeing Dubois, and continued it to the moment of their being laſt ſeparated, upon their entering Paris.

When ſhe had concluded, the Preſident read over what he had been writing, and then entreated

entreated ſhe would ſign it, which ſhe readily did, and the ſuperior and the two nuns followed her example. The Preſident then told the *good* lady, as he did not think it would be neceſſary to make Mademoiſelle de Ceare's depoſition publick, which he had only taken for his own ſatisfaction, he entreated ſhe would not mention what had paſſed, putting a handſome weighty purſe into her hands, as he concluded, to diſtribute in charities in his name, among any worthy objects ſhe might be acquainted with. She readily accepted the gift, promiſing to remember him and his Lady in her prayers.

He then took his leave of her and the young lady, aſſuring the latter, he had not a doubt now, but Dubois would be honourably acquitted, and proteſting he had her happineſs and future welfare as much at heart as if ſhe was his own daughter.

He returned home, ſatisfied in every reſpect, but with Mr. de Ceare, whom he

could hardly forgive; and not having any further buſineſs at Paris juſt then, he ſet out for his ſeat the next day, having heard that Champagne died late in the evening of that very day. The alarm he had been thrown into moſt likely haſtened his death, but he was juſtly puniſhed.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

THOUGH the Preſident had only been abſent three days, he found his ſon much better. The young man only wiſhed to be allowed to leave his room, aſſuring them all he was very well. This the Apothecary would by no means permit, though ſo excellent a phyſician; he told him he did not know what was proper for himſelf, ſo well as he did. But the old man began to wiſh he was made acquainted with his rank, perceiving

ing he was very thoughtful, and often uneaſy, as well he might, conſidering the time he had been at this magnificent ſeat, without even knowing the name of its owners. All that Mr. Rhubarbin ever choſe to tell him, was, that the maſter of it was a man of great rank, and his beſt friend, ſince it was through his means he had been amply juſtified of all the accuſations Mr. de Ceare, and the falſe Champagne, had laid to his charge. But theſe aſſurances by no means ſatisfied the Count, though he was very happy to have eſcaped an ignominious death, he ſo little deſerved; yet this did not prevent him from reflecting continually upon the unfortunate predicament he ſtood in, with regard to Mademoiſelle de Ceare; for his ſufferings, upon her account, had by no means diminiſhed his love, nor had they increaſed his hopes, as he thought himſelf the ſame Dubois he was before this adventure; the only conſolation was, that at the eminent hazard of his own life, he had delivered her from the perfidious Champagne. She felt the obligation

yet

yet her father was inſenſible to it, but this did not prevent his being Mr. Rhubarbin's ſon. However, he wiſhed very much now to return to Paris, as he was in hopes that he might there either ſee, or be able to write to the woman he adored, with more fervency than ever. He intended therefore to propoſe their departure to his father: ſtill he could not explain to his ſatisfaction the myſtery there ſeemed to be in his preſent ſituation. Though ſo much recovered, he was not allowed to leave his room, and he began to think they were afraid he ſhould make his eſcape a ſecond time; yet he was told he was perfectly juſtified: then why this confinement? or why ſhould Mr. Rhubarbin ſo obſtinately refuſe to ſatisfy the queſtions he ſo often aſked him, concerning the maſter and miſtreſs of this ſuperb manſion, who appeared ſo intereſted about him.

He had only ſeen one ſervant, who always attended the bell when Mr. Rhubarbin was with him, but who never entered when he was

was alone, though his behaviour was particularly reſpectful to him, he always obſerved they were afraid to let him ſee or ſpeak to any body elſe. Why all theſe precautions? and Rhubarbin always eluded anſwering his queſtions, and was evidently embarraſſed whenever he aſked him any; therefore he was convinced he was ſtill kept in ignorance of ſomething reſpecting his affair with Mademoiſelle de Ceare. But why could not his father tell him the name of this family, to whom they were under ſuch obligations? theſe different reflections made him often abſent and thoughtful.

Mr. Rhubarbin perceiving the agitation of his mind, and convinced he was perfectly out of danger, told the Preſident and his Lady, they might now venture to inform their ſon who he was, as he ſaw he was uneaſy at the myſtery which ſurrounded him.

As they were both exceſſively anxious for the moment which would allow them to give way

way to a fondneſs, which increaſed every day for this long loſt ſon, they propoſed going into his room immediately, to give him the welcome intelligence; but Rhubarbin entreated, for the laſt favour, to be allowed to break the matter to the young Count, ſaying, that notwithſtanding the filial fondneſs and reſpect he had always profeſſed, and he was ſure had felt for him, he was afraid he might reſent very ſtrongly his intention of depriving him for ever of the rank he was born to ſhine in, merely to gratify his own avarice; his only hope of pardon therefore, reſted upon being the herald of the agreeable intelligence to the young man.

They could not refuſe ſo natural a requeſt, and it was agreed that next morning the name of Dubois ſhould be conſigned to oblivion, to make way for that of Count de St. Blancard, which the young man now bore.

Mr. Rhubarbin went to bed, ruminating upon what he ſhould ſay, and in what manner he

he was to begin his ſtory. He occupied a room adjoining the Count's, a door only parted them. He ſlept very little, and roſe much earlier than uſual, having heard the Count move. Like a criminal when he is going to be tried, as the time drew near, the Apothecary ſaw and felt all the difficulty of the undertaking he was engaged in, at his own requeſt. At laſt, having ſummoned all his remaining courage to his aſſiſtance, he ventured into the Count's room, and began, as uſual, to aſk him how he did, and what ſort of a night he had had.

The young Count, who perceived an unuſual embarraſſment in his manner, looked at him very earneſtly, ſaying, he was very well, and had ſlept very quietly.

Mr. Rhubarbin felt a ſinking at the heart, and to recover himſelf, he walked to the bell, which he rung, and then approached one of the windows, which he opened. The ſervant who always attended, inſtantly came in, begging

begging to know if they choſe to have their breakfaſt. Mr. Rhubarbin anſwered in the affirmative; the ſervant went out, and ſoon returned with Chocolate; and as the young Count ſtill breakfaſted in bed, Mr. Rhubarbin preſented him with a diſh, telling the ſervant he need not wait.

The Count, who was very much puzzled by the confuſion the Apothecary was evidently in, drank his cup in ſilence, and when he ſat it down, wiſhing to draw him into converſation, ſaid, with a ſmile,

"Pray, my dear father, how long am I to be treated like an invalid? and when are we to leave this houſe? if the generoſity and politeneſs of its owners prevents them from thinking us troubleſome gueſts, I really think we ought not to intrude upon their hoſpitality any longer. You are as ſenſible as I am, that I am perfectly able to travel now,"—pauſing, and looking anxiouſly at the Apothecary, who now ſeriouſly began to repent

repent having undertaken the taſk he had ſolicited with ſuch eagerneſs. The Count would deſpiſe him, he thought, when he heard all he ſhould be obliged to tell him; then he was afraid the diſcovery might be more than the young man would be able to bear, after ſuch a ſevere illneſs.

The Count, who was waiting for the Apothecary's anſwer with the greateſt impatience, and examining his countenance very minutely, finding he did not ſpeak, ſaid,

"What is the matter, my dear father? why are you ſo agitated? do you fear any new misfortune will befall me? or have you only been flattering me with falſe hopes? your tears confirm my ſuſpicion: yes, you only perſuaded me I was juſtified, to facilitate my cure, and I am ſtill detained a priſoner in this houſe, as I thought I was. Speak, my dear father, any thing is better than ſuſpence."

Rhubarbin

Rhubarbin perceiving his emotion, and alarmed at what might be the conſequence of theſe ſuſpicions, overcame all his fears, and ſeizing hold of the hand which was next him, fell upon his knees by the bedſide, preſſing it fervently to his lips before he ſpoke; indeed his tears, which now flowed very copiouſly, prevented him.

This action, inſtead of diſſipating the Count's ſuſpicions, ſerved to increaſe them.

"What does all this mean?" ſaid he, in a faltering voice, "is that a poſture for a father, in his ſon's preſence? pray inform me what I have to fear? or why you act thus ſtrangely? perhaps it is the ſorrow you feel for my unfortunate deſtiny."

As the Apothecary ſtill remained ſilent, the Count ſaid, "well then, let me entreat you would calm yourſelf, my dear father; bear my misfortunes with fortitude: I once more aſſure you I am perfectly innocent, and I ſhall

I ſhall meet my fate with firmneſs, for I know I am condemned."

Here he diſengaged his hand from the Apothecary's, and fell back upon his pillow, exclaiming,

"Heaven have mercy upon the baſe wretches who have ſo wickedly conſpired againſt my life."

Mr. Rhubarbin was inſtantly rouſed from his reverie, for in his fright he jumped up, and began to aſſure the Count he was miſtaken; but he was ſome time before he could make the young man attend to him.

"Why did not you let me die at once? why ſtrive to recover me for ſuch a fate? Oh my father! beſides you, I ſhall leave all my ſoul holds dear in this world—tell her—"

Here Mr. Rhubarbin ſtopped his mouth, ſaying, "he would be heard—you have

nothing to fear, ſir; I know you are innocent—you are honourably acquitted—I vow to heaven you are. I alone am guilty; only ſay you can forgive a worthleſs, mercenary being; it is me alone who have every thing to dread."

The Count was more ſurpriſed than ever; he could not comprehend what the Apothecary meant: they both remained ſilent for a few ſeconds, gazing at each other, the Count holding his father, as he ſtill thought him, in his arms; at laſt he again entreated the Apothecary would calm himſelf, and he would liſten to him; "but pray explain to me what you mean.

"Oh, only promiſe to forgive me," ſaid Rhubarbin, "and I will tell you all."

"I do," ſaid the Count, "from the very bottom of my ſoul; I am certain you never acted wrong intentionally."

"Would

"Would to God I could ſay as much," ſaid Rhubarbin, "but indeed I cannot; I have not the honour of being your father."

Here Mr. Rhubarbin put his handkerchief to his eyes, unable juſt then to proceed, while the Count remained motionleſs, as much at a loſs as ever. At laſt, ſaid the Count, "for heaven ſake, ſir, relieve my anxiety? I never had any other father to my knowledge, nor ſhall I ever meet with ſuch another, if you abandon me."

This kind ſpeech made the Apothecary raiſe his head. "Only let me entreat, ſir, you would not let your joy overcome you, as my ſorrow has me; you do not know what it has coſt me to renounce a title, which I have for two years bore, in defiance of human nature. You are ignorant of the high rank you were born to enjoy: when you know all, you will hold me in abhorrence, if you do me juſtice. You promiſed to forgive me before you were acquainted with

with my crime; I return you your word; you are bleſſed with the moſt noble, generous relations, and I have done all in my power to keep you in ignorance of your illuſtrious origin; I have deceived and tormented the authors of your birth in the moſt cruel manner; I can only entreat upon my knees," aſſuming that poſture while he ſpoke, " a pardon I hardly dare expect, nor dare I repine, ſhould you refuſe to pronounce it, ſo much have I injured you. I am now a true penitent; but I muſt acknowledge, nothing but the imminent danger I thought your life was in, induced me to break the obſtinate ſilence I intended to have perſevered in 'till my death."

The Count liſtened to the Apothecary, without being able to comprehend a word of his ſtrange diſcourſe, and really began to think he was in a dream, which repreſented to him illuſions, as ſingular as they were ridiculous. He reflected, looked round him, and ſometimes thought he was hardly

ſenſible; at laſt he was convinced he was certainly awake, and that Rhubarbin had really uttered the words which had ſurpriſed him ſo much; he therefore tenderly embraced this father, who had now diſclaimed all right to that name, but whom he was thoroughly ſenſible had always treated him with the greateſt fondneſs; ſo addreſſing him, ſaid,

"Are you in earneſt, or am I rambling, my dear ſir?"

"You are perfectly ſenſible," ſaid Rhubarbin, hardly daring to look up.

"Then pray quit that humble poſture, my dear ſir, and elucidate this matter a little more; but before you ſpeak, allow me to aſſure you of my ſincere gratitude; believe me, no alteration in my rank or fortune will ever efface your kind treatment of me from my heart. If I am not your ſon," looking tenderly at him, "I am your pupil, the child of your adoption, I therefore owe you the

the more, ſince all that you have done for me has been the reſult of your generoſity and innate goodneſs; you were not obliged, I am convinced, to take ſuch care of me, nor to expend ſuch a ſum of money upon my education, nor to make me ſuch a liberal allowance as you always have done. I am not acquainted with the reaſons which induced you to adopt me, but I ſhall always remember your kindneſs, and the exceſſive love you bore me, therefore, can you doubt my gratitude, my dear father, for I won't permit you to reſign that title, 'till you have introduced me to my real one."

Theſe aſſurances quite revived Mr. Rhubarbin, who only ſaid he was all goodneſs, like his noble father.

The Count now ſaid, "he hoped the reaſons which had obliged him to conceal his origin from him for ſuch a number of years, would not prevent him from informing him now, who he really was."

"Oh no," ſaid Rhubarbin, "you will ſoon be in the arms of the tendereſt of parents."

"But when ſhall we ſet out?" ſaid the Count, exceſſively agitated: "I am very well, you know."

"Yes, the Lord be praiſed, you are much better, if this unexpected intelligence does not occaſion too great a revolution in your blood: you are ſtill far from ſtrong, therefore let me entreat you would lay down for a little while, and I will tell you more by and bye."

"Oh for heaven ſake, my dear ſir, let us ſet off immediately; every moment ſeems an age to me."

"There is no hurry," ſaid the Apothecary, "you will ſee your father and mother before night, I can aſſure you; they are coming here."

"And

"And have not they known where I have been, nor what has happened to me? or how came they to abandon me totally to your care, while I was ſo young?"

"That was not a voluntary act on their part," ſaid the Apothecary, "but you want to know too much at once," unwilling to come to the point too ſoon.

"Where do they live?" ſaid the Count, "and am I acquainted with them? only ſatisfy me in theſe particulars."

"They live very near this ſeat; very near indeed——nay, you are now under your——"

Here the Apothecary ſtopt, and again looked at the Count, who jumped up, exclaiming,

"Oh heaven! I gueſs every thing you would ſay; that dear Lady who has been ſo

good to me, and has ſhed ſo many tears upon my account, once called me her dear child, and you told me it was, becauſe ſhe had a ſon much about my age. She muſt be my mother: I am in my father's houſe, I am certain; and your kind friend, whoſe name you have ſo obſtinately concealed—who viſited me in priſon—ſupported me in his arms from Etampes here, in the carriage, is my father: now am I right?" graſping the Apothecary's hand very hard while he ſpoke.

"You are indeed," ſaid Rhubarbin, "ſo now let me entreat you would lay down for half an hour."

Inſtead of which, the Count jumped out of bed, proteſting he was quite well, and began to dreſs himſelf with the greateſt expedition, while Mr. Rhubarbin kept entreating him not to flurry himſelf ſo much, as he had a vaſt deal to tell him yet. But the Count hurrying on his clothes while he ſpoke, aſſured

aſſured him he was not curious to hear any more juſt then; his only wiſh was, to ſee and embrace his father and mother.

"But you don't even know their names yet," ſaid Rhubarbin, reaching him ſomething he was looking for, "nor your own."

"Oh, very true," ſaid the Count, pauſing, and looking at the Apothecary, "juſt ſatisfy me in that reſpect."

"Then, pray ſit down," ſaid the Apothecary.

"I ſhall hear all the ſame," ſaid the Count, finiſhing dreſſing himſelf as he ſtood: "pray tell me who I am, and who are my parents?"

"Well then, you, ſir," ſaid the Apothecary, with great emphaſis, to attract the young man's attention, "was born a Count, and heir to an immenſe fortune; and your

father is the Preſident de Ranſal; therefore you perceive, 'tis to your Judge you owe your exiſtence."

The Count looked petrified: "is it poſſible? and is the gentleman who has treated me with ſuch kindneſs, the ſame ſevere Judge I was examined before?"

"The very ſame, I aſſure you."

"I have often thought," ſaid the Count, "I had ſeen him before, but could never recollect where. But pray, what could make him treat his innocent ſon, in a publick court, with ſuch ſeverity? and whom he now treats with more kindneſs than he can ever deſerve?"

"All that will take me ſome time to explain, ſo now pray be ſeated."

"Since the recital will be ſo long," ſaid the Count, "I will liſten to it another time," advancing

advancing towards the door, which he was juſt going to open, when his mother, who had been waiting the reſult of the expected conference, in an adjoining apartment, all impatience to embrace her ſon, entered.

The Count retired a few ſteps, to let the door open, and when he ſaw who was coming in, would have flung himſelf upon his knees before her, but was prevented by her catching him in her arms, ſaying,

"My dear ſon, am I ſo bleſſed as to have you in my longing arms at laſt?"

They remained ſilent for a few moments; the joy of both was too great to allow them to ſpeak: it is impoſſible to form an idea of their mutual felicity.

"How ſhall I ever be able to convince my deareſt mother," ſaid the Count, "how much I felt the tender intereſt ſhe ſeemed to

like in my health, before I knew who I was, or how to expreſs my preſent happineſs?"

"Oh, I am already more than repaid for all the tears your loſs has coſt me. My darling child," ſaid the enraptured mother, "this is the happieſt moment I ever experienced," again embracing him.

Mr. Rhubarbin ſurveyed them in ſilent rapture; but a woman of her Ladyſhip's, who had followed her to the door, ran to inform the Preſident, that ſhe had left the young Count in her Lady's arms.

The Preſident, whoſe fondneſs for his ſon equalled his wife's, ſtarted up, almoſt jealous ſhe had enjoyed this tender meeting alone, and ran into the Count's room, where he arrived juſt as his wife and ſon were leaving it to join him.

"Oh here he is, my deareſt huſband," ſaid the fond mother, "our long loſt child, the

the firſt pledge of our love, and who has occaſioned us ſo many bitter moments; excuſe my ſtealing the firſt embrace; I wiſhed to have the pleaſure of preſenting him to you."

The Preſident, without anſwering, caught the Count in his arms, ſaying,

"My dear child, can you forgive your prejudiced Judge, who affected a rigour, believe me, he never felt, and for which he has ſeverely blamed himſelf; but what I then did, was out of tenderneſs for the dear boy whom I now embrace. My hopes of diſcovering what had become of you, made me affect a ſeverity my heart always diſavowed."

"No more, my dear father," ſaid the Count, "your clemency is univerſally acknowledged; I am exceſſively proud I can boaſt of ſuch a father; I can never regret any ſufferings I might undergo, to arrive at ſuch an honour."

His diſcourſe was only interrupted by the redoubled careſſes of both father and mother, who had now each their arms round him, and were only at a loſs how to expreſs the love they felt for him.

"Is it poſſible I did not perceive the ſtrong reſemblance there is between our ſon and you, my dear," ſaid the Preſident, "the firſt time I ſaw him?"

"Indeed I ſhould have wondered if you had, my dear father, conſidering —"

"I ſhall never forgive myſelf," ſaid the Preſident, interrupting, and again embracing him.

"What, for loving a ſon even then, whom you did know, more than ever a parent loved a child?"

"My

« My dear father," ſaid the Count, looking tenderly at the Preſident, « I hardly deſerved ſuch a bleſſing."

« My child," ſaid the amiable man, whoſe tears now flowed, as well as his wife's, and the young man's; the parents for joy at having found this much regretted youth, and who was ſo well deſerving the tender affection they bore him, and the Count's to find himſelf thus beloved by ſuch amiable parents.

The news had how reached every body in the caſtle; all the ſervants knew before, that the young ſtranger was their maſter's only ſon; but underſtanding he alſo knew who he was now, they all aſſembled in a body immediately, and headed by Madame Rhubarbin Elect, proceeded to the Count's apartment, to congratulate him upon his recovery, as well as to pay their court to him. The Count embraced his former couſin very tenderly, all the ſervants kiſſed his hand in turn,

turn, each expreſſing their joy in the ſincereſt terms.

The Count received theſe tokens of their attachment to his father and mother, in the moſt conciliating manner, and delighted them all by his benevolent looks and affable ſpeeches.

All this time Mr. Rhubarbin had remained a ſilent ſpectator, but as ſoon as the room was cleared of the ſervants, he approached him, and expreſſed his joy upon the happy occaſion, proteſting he could leſs than ever forgive himſelf, for having ſo long protracted ſuch a happy meeting.

" Oh, we will only look forward," ſaid the worthy Preſident, " we are all too happy to reflect upon our paſt ſorrows; our ſon has recovered from a moſt dangerous illneſs, through your care, and is reſtored to our arms.

" What

"What can we deſire more?" ſaid Madame La Preſidente.

Mr. Rhubarbin, highly flattered by ſuch polite treatment, begged leave to ſay, "that the intereſt he took in the Count's health, made him fearful he might ſuffer from the agitation he had been in, he therefore wiſhed the Preſident and his Lady would perſuade him to lay down for an hour, by way of recovering from his late emotion, for exceſſive joy was as hurtful as the oppoſite extreme."

Though both father and mother were loth to leave their ſon ſo ſoon, they perfectly acquieſced in the Apothecary's wiſhes; therefore, entreating their ſon, who ſeemed as unwilling to part with them, as they were to quit him, would follow his good friends advice, they left the room, for fear he ſhould prove a ſufferer through their fondneſs for him.

As

As ſoon as he was alone with the Apothecary, the Count, as might be expected, was obliged to acknowledge he was rather faint, and felt a ſlight return of his fever. Rhubarbin, who had felt his pulſe, was exceſſively alarmed, "it was what he feared, but he would not be ruled, hurrying and flurrying himſelf as he had done." He however abſolutely inſiſted upon his going to bed again immediately, and was going to ring for a ſervant, but the Count would not allow him, ſaying, "he only hoped his dear father," as he ſtill called him, "would ſet by his bedſide, and talk to him, and he would inſtantly undreſs."

The Apothecary readily agreed, and helped him off with his clothes. As ſoon as he was once more in bed, and Rhubarbin had taken his ſeat, the Count told him he ſhould not be able to ſleep, therefore, he entreated he would now favour him with the explanation which he had promiſed him, as he was

certain he ſhould be very well again, if he laid ſtill for a little time.

The Apothecary begged he would compoſe himſelf, and inſiſted upon his taking a few drops he preſented him with. The Count did as he was deſired, ſaid, "Indeed, my dear ſir, I only wiſh to get quite well, to be better able to thank you for all the goodneſs you have ſhewn me; as yet I am ignorant how I fell into your hands, but I am not ſo of the expence and trouble I have put you to, and the care you have taken of my education: however, if it don't ſuit you to inform me what your reaſons were for adopting me, I ſhall always look upon you as a father, and I hope you will ſtill treat me as your ſon."

Rhubarbin was highly pleaſed with this obliging diſcourſe, and thanked his noble ſon, as he called him, for his generous wiſhes.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VI.

THE Apothecary then told him the whole ſtory, as has been before related, and all he knew of his father and mother, and concluded by informing him how he was acquitted, and of Champagne's death.

The Count was not leſs pleaſed than ſurpriſed at the different adventures of his life; he felt himſelf much better after a few hours quiet repoſe, and from the drops he had taken, the fever had quite left him; he was allowed

allowed therefore to get up, to dine for the firſt time in his life with his father and mother, and never was there a happier party aſſembled.

In the afternoon they told the Count Mr. Rhubarbin was going to be married; that the articles were drawn and ſigned, and who was to figure as bride.

The Count ſaid he thought they would be a very happy couple, they were both ſo good tempered; he then aſked when the ceremony was to take place.

"It has been put off upon your account," ſaid the Preſident, "and to-morrow Mr. Rhubarbin and I go to Paris, upon ſome buſineſs relative to it; we ſhall not make a long ſtay, and I hope, when we return, we ſhall find you quite ſtrong and hearty, that is the only thing wanting to compleat our felicity."

The

The day was ſpent very jovially among the ſervants, and not leſs happily among their maſters, but the Count, by order of Mr. Rhubarbin, and at the requeſt of his parents, retired early. As ſoon as he was in bed, he began to reflect upon the remarkable occurrences of that memorable day.

Mademoiſelle de Ceare next occupied his thoughts; the change of circumſtances he had juſt experienced, could not be favourable to his paſſion for her; the augmentation of his fortune was hardly an object worthy his thoughts, he was rich enough when Dubois, had that been the only obſtacle that prevented their obtaining Mr. de Ceare's conſent; but now his rank was far ſuperior to her's, nay, to that of the very nobleman Mr. de Ceare had been ſo bent upon her marrying, and he was certain he was beloved, therefore, he thought he might now venture to look forward with hope; had he only conſulted his own inclination, he would not have loſt a moment, before he communicated theſe agreeable

agreeable tidings to the lovely Adelaide, as he wiſhed very much he might be the firſt who informed her of the happy change that had taken place in his name and circumſtances.

He aroſe very early the next morning, and went into Mr. Rhubarbin's room before he was ſtirring, to inform him he wiſhed very much to accompany his father and him to Paris.

The Apothecary declared it was the height of imprudence, even to think of ſuch a thing, at leaſt for a week. This appeared an age to the Count, who proteſted he ſhould receive great benefit, he was convinced, from the change of air; but Mr. Rhubarbin only ſmiled, ſaying, "he was certain his Lordſhip was as conſcious of the imprudence of ſuch a ſtep, in his preſent convaleſcent ſtate, as he was, he therefore preſumed he had ſome buſineſs of importance to tranſact at Paris, and if he would honour him with any commiſſion,

commiſſion, he ſhould be highly flattered, and might depend upon his punctuality and ſecreſy, if required."

The Count thanked him, and then ſaid, after a little heſitation, "he would oblige him very much if he would convey a letter to Mademoiſelle de Ceare, entreating, at the ſame time, if he was ſo fortunate as to ſee her, he would not even hint to her that he was not his ſon."

Rhubarbin promiſed to do his utmoſt endeavours to deliver it into her own hands, and aſſured him, he would in every reſpect be guided by his wiſhes.

The Count, highly pleaſed by this freſh proof of the Apothecary's friendſhip for him, wrote his letter immediately, and committed it to his care; he then accompanied him down ſtairs, and after an early breakfaſt, the Preſident and Rhubarbin ſet out for Paris, where they arrived the ſame evening.

During

During their journey, their converſation turned upon Mr. de Ceare, whoſe behaviour in this late adventure, had highly diſguſted the Preſident, it had been ſo ungenerous, not to ſay barbarous, throughout, both to the amiable Count, and his lovely daughter, whoſe only crime, after all, was mutual love; he therefore aſked Rhubarbin what he thought of his ſon's attachment for the young Lady, adding, he was convinced ſhe felt a very ſtrong partiality in his favour, though ſhe ſtill ſuppoſed him only Dubois.

Rhubarbin ſaid he did not doubt that, nor was it to be wondered at, conſidering the young man's figure and talents, added to the obligations he had laid her under, once by his ſkill, and ſecondly, by bravely defending her life, and hazarding his own, to conduct her to an aſylum in ſafety; but he really thought the Count's happineſs depended as much upon her, as the young Lady's could upon him.

I am

I am of opinion it does, ſaid the Preſident, but Mr. de Ceare is not yet acquainted with my ſon's innocence, for I gave orders that no one ſhould ſee his villain of a ſervant after I laſt examined him; although he may know he is dead, he cannot be acquainted with what paſſed previous to his diſſolution, therefore, he at preſent, no doubt, thinks his former depoſition will have equal, if not greater weight, in every body's eyes, from that very circumſtance, ſo I do not doubt he wiſhes for juſtice as eagerly as ever, and I promiſed not to let him languiſh long in expectation of it.

Rhubarbin ſaid, undoubtedly the Maſter of Requeſts had acted very abſurdly, he could not but allow, but ſtill he thought he had been very much deceived by the tale that villain Champagne had told him, juſt in the heat of his paſſion, when every thing made a ſtronger impreſſion than uſual upon a mind, already too much irritated againſt his daughter and the Count, whom he certainly ſuſpected

was

was the occaſion of her refuſing ſo many advantageous offers, adding, that Mademoiſelle de Ceare was a moſt lovely young woman, by all account, for he had never ſeen her, and her love for the Count was too ſincere to allow her even to regard her own reputation, when put in competition with his life, and her paſſion was certainly diſintereſted, as it had commenced when he was, according to all appearances, only the ſon of an Apothecary; but ſhe had diſtinguiſhed his ſuperior merit and underſtanding, and had evidently preferred him to ſome titled men of equal birth and riches with himſelf. At preſent, therefore, he hoped the Preſident would overlook a few faults in her father (which had originated in his over-bearing pride, and his ſtrict notions of female honour) for the ſake of the amiable young lovers, whoſe hearts had been long ſince in each other's poſſeſſion. He then informed the Preſident of the commiſſion the Count had given him, previous to his departure.

The Preſident ſmiled at the Apothecary's anxiety, and ſaid, all things conſidered, he did not wonder to hear him plead the lovers cauſes ſo well, and then begged to look at the letter he was the bearer of, as that would poſſibly, in ſome reſpects, decide his future plans.

Rhubarbin dared not refuſe ſuch a requeſt, but began ſeriouſly to repent having mentioned it, as it was not keeping his word with the Count, but there was no alternative, ſo he gave the Preſident the letter; it was not a very long one, only entreating three words in anſwer to his affectionate inquiries after her health, adding, he had ſomething of the utmoſt importance to communicate to her, which he muſt defer 'till he had an opportunity of throwing himſelf at her feet; he therefore entreated ſhe would allow him to ſee her in private, for one half hour only, as ſoon as poſſibly ſhe could make it convenient, after his return to Paris, hoping ſhe was convinced what he had to impart to her, was very eſ-

ſential

ſential to their future happineſs, which only could induce him to make ſuch a requeſt.

The delicacy and reſpect his ſon treated Mademoiſelle de Ceare with, convinced the Preſident their love was as ſincere as it was mutual, he therefore wiſhed very much to contribute to the happineſs of two ſuch amiable characters, particularly as one of the intereſted parties was a ſon he adored; but to affect this, he muſt ſtifle his reſentment againſt Mr. de Ceare, not a very difficult talk in the ſerene ſtate of mind he was then in; he therefore told Rhubarbin, the morning after their arrival, he ſhould go with a friend of his, who had been preſent at Champagne's confeſſion, to Mr. de Ceare's, to whom they were to preſent both Champagne's laſt, and his daughter's depoſition, adding, that after they had convinced him of the Count's innocence, they might inform him who he was.

Rhubarbin was delighted at the taſk the Preſident allotted him, ſo he prepared, with

the greateſt alacrity, to accompany the Marquis de Courſelle, who had breakfaſted with him, to Mr. de Ceare's.

They ſoon arrived at his hotel, and Rhubarbin alone ſent in his name, entreating to be admitted into the preſence of the Magiſtrate; he obtained the favour he requeſted, and entered the dreſſing room, followed by the Marquis, in which the old gentleman ſat in a very ſplenetic humour, that his gout by no means helped to ſweeten. The Apothecary, whom he had often ſeen, approached him very humbly.

"Oh ſcoundrel," ſaid the Maſter of Requeſts, "where is your villain of a ſon? what you are come to beg he may not be executed in effigy—ha—or is he overtaken, and brought back to priſon? but at all events, I have been promiſed juſtice, and juſtice I will have: but my time is precious, what have you to ſay?"

"That

"That I am not come upon the ſorrowful errand you ſeem to wiſh had brought me," ſaid Rhubarbin, with an air of triumph; "I have no ſon to implore your mercy in favour of, thank heaven."

"Ha, what is he dead?" ſaid the Magiſtrate, rather ſoftened.

"Pray read thoſe papers, if you pleaſe ſir," ſaid the Apothecary, laying the two depoſitions upon the table before him, "they may perhaps convince you that you have been in a little error."

Mr. de Ceare was amazed at the ſerenity of Rhubarbin's countenance; he looked at him very earneſtly, and at laſt, without aſking either him or his companion (whom he did not even deign to caſt his eyes upon) to ſit down, he took up his daughter's depoſition, which laid neareſt him, read a few lines, and then burſt into a kind of hyſterical laugh, and flung it into the fire, ſaying, "did you ſup-

poſe what a ſilly love-ſick girl chuſes to ſwear, will have any weight with me. I preſume you have heard," looking at Rhubarbin with a menacing air, "that my faithful ſervant, who was the means, under Providence, of preventing your murderer of a ſon, and my daughter, from making their eſcape into a foreign country, is ſince dead, but his former depoſition will be ſufficient to bring Mr. Dubois to the ſcaffold. I find there has been ſome plan in agitation ſince I have been confined in my apartment, for none of my ſervants were permitted to ſee the poor fellow on the day he died, but I ſhall diſcover who was at the bottom of that, Mr. Apothecary, depend upon it, when I am able to go out. I fancy the Preſident de Ranſal's name has been very often uſed in the courſe of this buſineſs, without his permiſſion."

"I believe you will not diſcover that, ſir," ſays the Marquis de Courcelle, who began to be tired of ſtanding and witneſſing the Maſter of Requeſt's inſolent triumph over the Apothecary;

thecary; "but you may as well read the other paper which lays before you; I only beg leave to hint, that if you throw it in the fire as you did the former one, ſome conſequences may enſue, you may poſſibly not be aware of at preſent."

Mr. de Ceare, aſtoniſhed at this addreſs, now looked, for the firſt time, at the Marquis, whoſe ſtar and red ribbon, for he wore the ſuperior order of St. Louis, added great weight to his words, and ſtill more to the Magiſtrate's ſurpriſe, who was aſtoniſhed he had not made this diſcovery ſooner; but the Marquis had choſe to keep in the back ground.

Evidently mortified to think he ſhould have been ſo impolite to ſuch a man, Mr. de Ceare, without ſaying a ſingle word, took up Champagne's laſt depoſition, and turned pale before he had got half through it; he then looked at the bottom of the paper, where he ſaw the Preſident's name, and that

of two other noblemen, one of whom he was ſlightly acquainted with, beſides the ſurgeon.

" Pray Sir," ſaid he, addreſſing the Marquis, though he hardly dare look at him, " when was this depoſition taken?"

" I think you will find the day and the hour both, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, " if you take the trouble of looking."

" And were you preſent, pray ſir?" ſaid the agitated Magiſtrate.

" I was, ſir."

" I have the honour, then, I preſume, of addreſſing the Marquis de Courcelle."

The Marquis bowed.

The Maſter of Requeſts never recovered from a fit of the gout in ſo ſhort a time; this unexpected denouncement quite electrified him,

him, he jumped up, entreating both the Marquis and Rhubarbin would be ſeated, begging ten thouſand pardons of the former, for having allowed him to ſtand ſo long, and for having treated him ſo unpolitely, imputing all the blame to his ſervants, for not having announced him properly.

The Marquis took his ſeat very coolly, entreating ſuch a trifling overſight might not derange him.

The Magiſtrate thought he perceived a little irony upon the great man's countenance, and when he was a little calm, he again reſumed the paper, ſaying, "What a wretch Champagne muſt be, wiſhed he had lived to have expiated his horrid unheard of crimes upon a ſcaffold. How have I been deceived by the villain: then aſſured Mr. Rhubarbin of his unfeigned repentance: he had proceeded to ſuch lengths upon the teſtimony of ſuch a vile being: hoped his ſon had not loſt his life through his miſtaken rigour,

declaring he ſhould never forgive himſelf if he had, and ſeemed really to dread to learn the death of a perſon he would have rejoiced to have ſeen broke upon the wheel not an hour before.

" I have already told you, ſir," ſaid the Apothecary, " I am no longer bleſt with a ſon; the young gentleman you ſo unfortunately perſecuted, was very near falling a ſacrifice to your error or miſtake, as he is but juſt recovered from a moſt dangerous fit of illneſs, which ſeveral times baffled all my ſkill, and I once thought would have deprived his noble parents of an only ſon, they could never have ſufficiently regretted, had they ſurvived him, which I much doubt: in ſhort, ſir, you are acquainted with the Preſident de Ranſal's hiſtory, I underſtand, therefore you will not be very much ſurpriſed when I inform you, that the ſuppoſed Dubois, that worſt of all criminals, as you once thought, is no other than the Count de St. Blancard, only ſon to the Preſident de Ranſal, the

the child who was expoſed by his grandfather's orders, and whom I found, and have now reſtored to his illuſtrious parents, though I muſt ſay, I did not make the ſacrifice voluntarily."

Here Rhubarbin ſtopped, and enjoyed, in ſilence, the mortification of this exceſſive proud man, who was abſolutely petrified.

"Gracious God!" he exclaimed, "the Preſident might well treat me with ſuch coolneſs when he was here laſt. I have been much too haſty, my folly ſtares me in the face now, and I am afraid I ſhall never be able to repair it. But why, why Mr. Rhubarbin, did you ſo obſtinately perſiſt in concealing the young Count's birth?"

"He was as innocent, ſir, when only ſimple Dubois," ſaid the Apothecary, with an ironical look, "as he can be now, though he is ſo much *our* ſuperior," laying great emphaſis upon the word our, and I believe

your rigour towards my ſon was as unpardonable in the eyes of the world, as, had it been known, 'twas exerciſed againſt the Preſident de Ranſal's only ſon and heir."

"I agree I have acted very fooliſhly," ſaid Mr. de Ceare; I cannot think what could poſſeſs me; a thouſand things ought to have convinced me of that young man's noble origin. The Preſident's ſtory — oh fool that I was."

"I often think 'tis a great pity," ſaid Rhubarbin, ſarcaſtically looking at Mr. de Ceare, "our characters and origin are not wrote more legibly upon our foreheads; it was aſtoniſhing you could ever ſuppoſe the Count de St. Blancard was my ſon."

"Pray is the Preſident in town, Marquis?" ſaid Mr. de Ceare, half piqued with the Apothecary.

"He

"He is, sir," replied the Marquis, "he arrived late last night."

"And you are sure the young Count is out of danger, Rhubarbin?" said the Magistrate, turning to the Apothecary, with an affected anxiety, to conceal his anger.

"I am confident he was so yesterday, sir, when I left the Castle."

Mr. de Ceare instantly rung the bell, and ordered his carriage to be got ready immediately, saying, "he could not rest 'till he had made his excuses to the President, though he had not left his room for more than six weeks, but if it cost him his life, he would venture."

Rhubarbin was highly pleased he had been instrumental in the humbling Mr. de Ceare's abominable pride, who was now excessively polite even to him, wishing both the Marquis and him to make a vast merit of what he was about

about to do to the Preſident. Indeed he rather expected Rhubarbin would have pointed out the imprudence of leaving a warm room 'till he was better able to bear the cold, and that the Marquis, in conſequence, would have adviſed him either to have wrote, or have offered to deliver a verbal meſſage to the Preſident from him; but he found himſelf miſtaken in his conjectures, as they both roſe to take their leave, ſaying, "they would inform the Preſident of his intended viſit," and getting into the Marquis's carriage, drove back to the Hotel de Ranſal."

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

THE Preſident was all impatience to learn the ſucceſs of their embaſſy. They had agreed, going along, to omit ſome part of the Maſter of Requeſts remarks, to prevent a quarrel between him and the Preſident, merely for the ſake of the young people, as a miſunderſtanding between the two fathers, juſt then, might make them both miſerable for life; they therefore determined to repreſent the Magiſtrate's ſincere repentance, in the

the moſt ſtriking light. They had hardly entered upon their ſtory, before Mr. de Ceare arrived.

The Preſident, who was prepared for his viſit, ordered him to be ſhewn in. Whether he wiſhed to excite the Preſident's pity, or whether his gout had really returned, cannot be eaſily reſolved, however, he made uſe of his crutches now, and ſome terrible four faces, as he advanced.

The Preſident received him rather coolly, while Mr. de Ceare made a thouſand excuſes for having believed his worthleſs ſervant, proteſting he was ſhocked to hear the Count had been ſo great a ſufferer, by his ill-timed rigour.

"That he certainly has, ſir," ſaid the Preſident, "conſcious innocence, and the rectitude of his own heart and principles, alone prevented him from giving way to deſpair, during the complicated ills he laboured under;

under; but what amazed me moſt, ſir, is your refuſing to hear your daughter, and even totally diſbelieving her aſſertions in favour of my ſon."

Mr. de Ceare was exceſſively confuſed, and took ſome ſeconds to prepare his anſwer, then ſaid, in a faltering voice, "You know, my noble friend, appearances were very ſtrong againſt my daughter: ſhe is young and inexperienced, and then, what would not a young woman do to ſave the life of the man ſhe loved? I have often tried to bring myſelf to conſent to this match, I can aſſure your Lordſhip, conſident my daughter's peace of mind depended upon it."

"I really wonder ſuch a reflection had not more weight with you, ſir," ſaid the Preſident.

"I dare not now hope ſhe will ever recover it, my Lord," ſaid the Magiſtrate, unable to reſtrain his tears, which were more occaſioned

occaſioned by the ſorrow he felt at having, as he thought, miſſed ſuch an alliance for his daughter, than by his repentance for his harſh treatment of either her or her lover.

The Preſident rather ſoftened, and too good himſelf to ſuſpect others of being leſs ſo, almoſt forgave Mr. de Ceare, upon this proof of his ſorrow, as he ſuppoſed, for the late ſufferings of two ſuch deſerving young people. He therefore entreated the Marquis and Rhubarbin would walk into the next room for a few minutes, as he wiſhed to have a little private converſation with Mr. de Ceare, who ſeemed too lame to move.

The Magiſtrate ſeemed ſurpriſed, but dared not give way to his hopes. The conference laſted a conſiderable time, and at laſt they parted, apparently in a much better temper with each other, than when they met. The Preſident called upon Mr. de Ceare the next day, and the ſecond, he and Mr. Rhubarbin returned to the Caſtle. They arrived ſooner

than

than they were expected, but found the Count much better than when they left him.

He was all anxiety to ſpeak to Rhubarbin in private; the Preſident perceiving his impatience, told his Lady he wanted to ſpeak to her, and they quitted the room, leaving the Apothecary and his pupil together, as the bride elect was in her own apartment, not having heard of their arrival.

The Count hardly let the door ſhut, before he aſked Rhubarbin if he had brought him an anſwer to his letter.

The Apothecary and the Preſident had ſettled what he was to ſay. He had not got a letter for him, but he had ſeen Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and given his.

"And what did ſhe ſay?—how does ſhe do?—how does ſhe look?" ſaid the Count.

"Oh

"Oh you are ſo impatient," ſaid Rhubarbin, "why ſhe looked tolerably well—was exceſſively happy—and read your letter with as much pleaſure as you would her anſwer, had I brought you one, and promiſed you ſhould ſoon hear from her, when ſhe hoped to be able to appoint a time for ſeeing you."

This news quite delighted the Count; he caught Rhubarbin in his arms, ſaying, "My dear father, you don't know how happy you have made me; how can I thank you? oh you have revived all my hopes; I am ſure I am ſtill beloved, and I can now pretend to her hand; I am convinced my father and mother will not refuſe their conſent to our union, and I think Mr. de Ceare's objections to an alliance with me are now obviated." This was ſaid with a half ſmile, as he by no means wiſhed to hurt Rhubarbin, and was ſo flattered by what he had heard, that he reſted better than he had done for ſome time, and for ſeveral ſucceeding days his ſtrength increaſed obviouſly. He was

now

now permitted to walk in the gardens, or to take the air on horſeback, and a little moderate exerciſe ſoon recovered him.

He was taking a walk one morning, about a week after Rhubarbin's return, revolving in his own mind, the happy proſpects he now looked forward to, determining to go to Paris as ſoon as Rhubarbin was married, growing every day more anxious to ſee Mademoiſelle de Ceare, when one of his mother's footmen, who was come in ſearch of him, informed him ſhe waited breakfaſt for him. He immediately returned into the houſe, and found his father and mother alone, waiting for him, Mr. Rhubarbin and his intended having breakfaſted tête à tête. He received a few tender reproaches for the little care he took of his returning health; ſuch long walks were too fatiguing, his mother ſaid, before breakfaſt. He aſſured them both his illneſs had left him with his uneaſineſs, and that he was perfectly well, adding, laughing while he

he ſpoke, "he muſt be allowed to be a competent judge."

"Oh I don't doubt your profeſſional talents," ſaid the Preſident," alſo laughing, "but I am very happy to hear you are perfectly well, as I have a propoſition to make to you, which would not have ſuited an invalid."

The Count now eaſily gueſſed, why Mr. Rhubarbin and his future bride had breakfaſted alone; he looked very earneſtly at his father, and his courage all forſook him, not doubting but this propoſition alluded to marriage; he was not miſtaken.

The Preſident ſaid, "he had a very advantageous match in view for him."

But Mademoiſelle de Ceare occupied all his thoughts, and her image filled his heart ſo entirely, he could not bear the thoughts of any

any other lady, he therefore ſaid, in an embarraſſed tone,

"He hoped his father would not hurry him upon that point; he was very young, and he was in no haſte to change his ſituation."

"But you certainly do not intend to remain ſingle long," ſaid the Preſident, "and I promiſe you I will make you perfectly independent the moment you marry."

"I am certain, my dear father, you felt the weight of paternal authority too much yourſelf, to induce you to wiſh to force my inclination, in ſo important an act of my life."

His father and mother ſtrongly felt the force of his argument, and his mother fearing to hurt his feelings, or his health, entreated he would not be alarmed, aſſuring him,

him, they wiſhed to ſee him happy in the marriage ſtate, which certainly could only be with the woman of his choice; they thought he could not have any repugnance to comply with their wiſhes, provided he liked the lady.

" I aſſure you, my dear ſon," ſaid the Preſident, " I never mean to exert an authority I hardly think lawful, ſo pray don't look ſo ſerious," taking his hand, " your mother and I have been debating this matter; I only mentioned it, becauſe, as I ſaid before, we knew of a very advantageous match for you; but I nevertheleſs mean to leave you perfectly at liberty to follow your own inclinations; I have only propoſed the matter conditionally to the Lady's father, whom I ſaw when I was at Paris, and who is perfectly acquainted with your ſtory; they will be here in a few days, to be preſent at Mr. Rhubarbin's wedding, as I mean to give a fête upon that occaſion, therefore you will

have an excellent opportunity of ſeeing the Lady, and if you like her, well and good, if not, there will be no harm done; I am convinced you will treat her with that politeneſs we all owe the fair ſex, if you do not commence her lover: but as you very juſtly obſerved, your mother and I ſuffered too much, through your grandfather's arbitrary uſe of his power, ever to lay any reſtraint upon the inclinations of an only ſon, whom we both idolize; we only hope you will not long remain a bachelor, and depend upon it, that your choice, (ſo high an opinion have we of your prudence) let it fall upon whom it may, ſhall be followed by our conſent." Then, as if to change the ſubject, the Preſident ſaid, "I underſtand, from Rhubarbin, you have made a great ſtudy of the law, as well as phyſic, and that you prefered the former, ſo if you will turn your thoughts wholly that way, when you are ſettled, I mean to reſign my charge to you, only recollect, that a man of your rank and fortune, and an only ſon, ought to marry early."

The Count felt himſelf much more at his eaſe, at the concluſion of his father's ſpeech, than he did at the beginning; he thanked both him and his mother, in the moſt grateful terms, for the indulgence they treated him with, ſaying, he only wiſhed to oblige them in every action of his life.

He remained with his father and mother, talking upon different ſubjects, 'till it was time for him to dreſs.

While he was thus occupied, he reflected upon what his father had ſaid: perhaps, thought he, my father may not approve of the woman I adore, if the Maſter of Requeſts had diſdained him while plain Dubois, might not the Preſident de Ranſal think him now as much Mademoiſelle de Ceare's ſuperior, as he had before been the reverſe? theſe ideas did not pleaſe him: his father had promiſed not to interfere in his choice of a wife, therefore, he ought more than ever to avoid diſobliging

diſobliging him. The Preſident muſt be ſenſible of the paſſion he felt for Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and his ſo carefully avoiding mentioning his ſuſpicions to him, was a tacit proof he diſapproved of the alliance; and the propoſition he had juſt made him, was a ſtill more convincing one. His hair once dreſſed, his toilet would ſoon have been concluded, if he had not found a very conſiderable addition to his wardrobe, as the Preſident had taken care, dure his convaleſcence, to provide him with every thing ſuitable to his preſent ſtation in life; he therefore, for the firſt time, laid aſide the plain clothes his late profeſſion obliged him to wear, as this day was devoted to receiving the gentry of the environs, who came to felicitate the Preſident and his Lady, upon the almoſt miraculous reſtoration of their ſon.

They did not retire 'till late, and the Count went to bed, full of the morning's converſation, and the Lady his father had propoſed to

him. As his thoughts fell into a diſagreeable channel, he was not able to ſleep, 'till it was almoſt time to get up; he therefore did not wake 'till late in the forenoon, and ſtarted up when he ſaw what o'clock it was, and his valet in the room, who was waiting his commands.

"Why did not you wake me?" ſaid the Count, "I hope my father and mother have not waited breakfaſt for me; is it poſſible I can have ſo ſtrangely overſlept myſelf?"

"They waited ſome time, my Lord, but they deſired me not to diſturb you. The company who were expected for Mr. Rhubarbin's wedding, are juſt arrived, my Lord."

This news made the Count jump out of bed; he did not like to appear ignorant, but had thought this wedding was not to have taken place for three or four days. His father wiſhed to ſurpriſe him agreeably, he ſuppoſed,

ſuppoſed, or he had miſunderſtood him when he mentioned it to him.

He breakfaſted in a hurry, during which he reflected, it did not ſignify now whether he made his appearance before dinner or not, therefore did not hurry his toilet ſo much; however, he ſat down to have his hair dreſſed.

The valet judging, by the precipitation with which his maſter had got up, he was in haſte to join the company, began the taſk as expeditiouſly as he could; but for the firſt time ſince he had been in his ſervice, he found him in a very bad temper, and could not dreſs his hair to pleaſe him; not that the Count wiſhed to make a favourable impreſſion upon the Lady he was preparing to meet, ſince he only wiſhed to protract the time; he therefore made his ſervant alter his curls ſeveral times, upon different pretences.

The Preſident ſent him word twice, company was arrived, and that he was expected in the ſaloon; but the Count only wiſhed they had not hurried themſelves more than he did, and was almoſt convinced, in his own mind, they were not expected ſo ſoon; he thought they did not chuſe to loſe any time, but I am determined their great haſte ſhall not avail them much; this muſt be ſome father, very anxious to get rid of his daughter, or ſome young lady in a great hurry for a huſband.

Here his reflections were interrupted by the entrance of the Preſident, who ſaid, with a ſmile, "Why, my dear boy, you ſlept charmingly laſt night; but I wonder the thoughts of ſeeing a very handſome young Lady has not made you hurry yourſelf a little more ſince you have been up; I dare ſay ſhe will accuſe you of want of gallantry."

"I am very ſorry, ſir," ſaid the Count, very coolly, "I wiſh you had ordered me to have

have been awoke ſooner; but I did not underſtand the company was expected to day."

"Oh an excellent excuſe," ſaid the Preſident, laughing, "well, come, never mind now, you are dreſſed, I will attend you down ſtairs."

The Count could not make any objection to this propoſal, he therefore followed his father down in ſilence, wiſhing the Lady in queſtion any where but in his father's houſe.

The Preſident opened the ſaloon door, and went in, his ſon being a few paces behind him; he ſtood with the door in his hand, ſo that the Count could not paſs him, nor ſee who was in the room; he only heard the Preſident ſay, addreſſing the young Lady's father,

"I am very ſorry to inform you, ſir, before I introduce my ſon, that I muſt with-

draw the word I had given you, my ſon will not marry your daughter; I have mentioned the matter to him, and extolled her beauty and accompliſhments, in terms ſuitable to her merit: whether he has any other Lady in view, I cannot pretend to ſay, but he chuſes to decline the honour you intended him; I only hope you will excuſe me, as my word was given conditionally, you muſt remember."

"I am really exceſſively ſorry, my Lord," ſaid the gentleman, "my daughter ſhould have miſſed ſo advantageous a match, as I muſt own, an alliance with your family would have made me ſupremely happy, it was ſo much above my hopes; but I cannot ſay I am ſo much hurt as I ſhould have been, becauſe, having mentioned my intentions to my daughter two days ago, ſhe entreated I would allow her to take the veil, aſſuring me, ſhe preferred a monaſtic life, to becoming the wife of the Count de St. Blancard, notwithſtanding

ſtanding his high rank and great merit; ſo there is no harm done. I do not mean to force my daughter's inclinations, my Lord, any more than you do your ſon's, therefore all is ſettled."

If the Preſident's diſcourſe had ſurpriſed the Count, the young Lady's father's anſwer increaſed his aſtoniſhment to the higheſt pitch; he would almoſt have ſuppoſed they were both mad, yet he thought he recollected the voice of the laſt orator.

The Preſident now ſlipt without ſide the door, and led the Count in, ſaying, "Come, now, make your own apologies for your want of gallantry."

The young man was ſo confuſed, he hardly dare raiſe his eyes upon either father or daughter, his introduction to them had been ſo ſtrange; at laſt, after a very awkward bow or two, he ventured to look up, and re-

mained motionleſs, upon perceiving Mr. de Ceare and his lovely daughter. He inſtantly gueſſed why the Preſident had ſtopped him at the door, and made ſuch a ridiculous ſpeech.

But Mademoiſelle de Ceare was infinitely more ſurpriſed than her lover, as ſhe was totally ignorant of the change Dubois's fortune and rank had undergone, ſhe therefore could not comprehend how he came to be at the Preſident's, and ſtill leſs how he came to be introduced as ſo great a man's ſon, for whom ſhe had felt the greateſt repugnance, even before ſhe had ſeen him.

They looked at one another in ſilence, but their eyes ſufficiently expreſſed the happineſs this unexpected meeting gave them.

Madame La Preſident aroſe from her ſeat, wiping a tear of joy, ſaying,

" We

" We are too cruel, the fatal error which has coſt us ſo dear, has ſufficiently tormented theſe young people," taking her ſon by the hand, whom ſhe led to Mademoiſelle de Ceare, ſaying,

" She hoped his having changed his name, would not occaſion any alteration in her ſentiments."

The Count raiſed the beautiful hand his mother had put into his, to his lips, in ſilence, while the happy mother preſented her's to the Maſter of Requeſts, and ſaid,

" Come, my dear ſir, let us leave them together, they will be better able to explain this enigma to each other tête à tête."

" Very true, Madam," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, with an air of the greateſt triumph, " let them have their quarrel out by themſelves;

ſelves; his pride and vanity had never been ſo fully gratified before."

The Preſident enjoyed the ſcene with his Lady, and Mr. de Ceare therefore left the room.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

AFTER allowing a few moments to expreſs the mutual joy they felt at this unforeſeen meeting, "Pray," ſaid Mademoiſelle de Ceare, "what does all this mean? how came you here, my dear Dubois? I believe I need not tell you how happy I am to ſee you, though you don't look ſo well as you did," looking tenderly at him, "but pray explain this myſtery to me?"

The

The Count's joy was too great for ſome time to allow him to enter into any details; but Mademoiſelle de Ceare's was by no means inferior to his, when her lover informed her who he was. Convinced now her father was exceſſively proud, he was allowed to hope he ſhould ſee her united to the very man he had ſo long deſpiſed.

Their diſcourſe was ſo incoherent, they could hardly underſtand each other; however, the Count made his ſtory as ſhort as poſſible, entreating ſhe would favour him with an account of what had happened to herſelf ſince their ſeparation.

She told him what had paſſed, upon her firſt arrival at Paris; how ſhe had been treated by the pious ſuperior, and that ſhe had, at laſt, bribed one of the lay ſiſters to put a letter to the Marquis d'Elcour into the poſt for her; ſhe next told him how ſhocked ſhe had been, when the ſuperior told her he was

was almoſt convicted upon Champagne's evidence, and that ſhe had determined not to ſurvive him.

She was in this horrid ſtate of mind when the Preſident waited upon her; ſhe was exceſſively happy to ſee him, and ſtill more overjoyed when ſhe learnt the purport of his viſit; his kind diſcourſe and tender conſolation, had greatly calmed her anxiety, and the very next day ſhe learnt he had made his eſcape from priſon ſome time before; but as ſhe alſo heard he was very ill, was ſtill exceſſively uneaſy; ſhe therefore again wrote to her brother, to haſten him, if he was upon the road, which ſhe hardly doubted, and was very impatiently waiting for an anſwer, nay, expecting to ſee him in perſon, when my father ſent for me home, two days ago, and told me, to prevent my running away to my aunt's again, he intended to marry me as ſoon as poſſible, as a very advantageous offer had been juſt made him, in my favour: in a word,

word, the Count de St. Blancard, the only ſon of the Preſident de Ranſal, convinced of your innocence, wiſhes to unite his deſtiny to your's. I think I ſhall pleaſe you this time; the young man is remarkably handſome, (the Count bluſhed at this eulogium, though it was really juſt) of a moſt amiable character, juſt turned of four and twenty, and exceſſively rich; now I think your objections to marriage muſt vaniſh before ſuch an offer.

But at the very name of a new lover, and one whoſe conduct hurt me exceſſively, notwithſtanding all my father had ſaid in his favour, as I thought you alone knew how baſely I had been calumniated, I actually fainted in my chair.

When I came to myſelf, I entreated my father would allow me to take the veil, as I ſhould be miſerable for life, were I to marry a man I was convinced I ſhould always deteſt, and

and for the firſt time in my life, I flattered myſelf I had really ſoftened my father, for he ſeemed hurt, and promiſed not to oblige me to marry any man contrary to my inclinations; but as he was obliged to pay the Preſident and his Lady a viſit, having long promiſed them; he hoped I ſhould have no objection to being of the party, as ſeeing the young Count would not make me his wife againſt my will.

I dared not refuſe, or I certainly ſhould, having determined the efforts of two families combined, ſhould not induce me to alter my reſolution.

My father then informed me, we were to ſet out for the Preſident's caſtle in a couple of days; I then wrote another letter to my brother, in which I informed him of all that had paſſed ſince my return home, and I left ſtrict orders to have it delivered into his own hands the minute he arrived; therefore judge of the ſurpriſe

ſurpriſe I felt, in finding my dear Dubois in this very Count I deteſted, and whom I was prepared to ſee with horror and antipathy.

They had been near two hours alone, without even reflecting about the reſt of the company, or the time that had elapſed, when Madame La Preſident, who could hardly bear to loſe ſight of her ſon, joined them.

"Well, my dear children," to uſe Mr. de Ceare's phraſe, "have you had your quarrel out? what now is your determination? if you have not abſolutely decided, I will leave you alone a little longer."

"Oh my dear Madam," ſpeaking both at once," your preſence only adds to our happineſs."

"I am very happy to hear it; but my dear ſon," addreſſing the Count, "pray ſuppreſs that formal expreſſion when you addreſs me,

me, call me your mother, I have been long enough deprived of that title."

The Count took her hand, which he preſſed to his lips, ſaying, "her orders were too agreeable, not to be implicitly obeyed."

They were all three in a moſt intereſting diſcourſe, when a ſervant came and told the Count the Preſident wiſhed to ſpeak with him; he immediately attended him, leaving his mother and Mademoiſelle de Ceare together; the latter now learnt, that her behaviour to the Preſident, during the viſit he paid her in the convent, and his ſon's letter to her, which he had ſent by Rhubarbin, and which ſhe had never received, had ſo ſtrongly convinced the Judge of their mutual love, that he reſolved to unite them. When Mr. de Ceare waited upon him at Paris, he propoſed the matter to him, and the Maſter of Requeſts inſtantly conſented; they planned this ſcheme by way of an agreeable ſurpriſe to both,

both, but to which Madame La Preſident never freely conſented, thinking it was only prolonging their mutual anxiety. They were now again interrupted by another ſervant, who came to inform them that the Marquis d'Elcour was juſt arrived.

He had received his ſiſter's firſt letter at Rome, and had ſet out immediately for Paris, where, upon his arrival, he found the laſt ſhe had left for him, and one from the Maſter of Requeſts, who knew he was upon his return, (having alſo wrote to haſten him home) inviting him to his ſiſter's wedding, as ſhe was at laſt going to be married to the Count de St. Blancard, and the ceremony was to take place at the Preſident de Ranſal's ſeat in L'Orleannois.

The Marquis inquired, as ſoon as he had peruſed both letters, when Mr. de Ceare and his ſiſter ſet off, and underſtanding they had only left Paris that morning, he followed them

them immediately, intending to travel all night, convinced his father-in-law was determined his ſiſter ſhould marry this young Count, for whom he felt as ſtrong an averſion as ſhe poſſibly could, though he had never heard of the Preſident de Ranſal's having a ſon before, ſtill he knew, from his ſiſter's letters, this ſame Preſident was his dear Dubois's Judge (for whoſe fate he was exceſſively anxious) that alone was enough to prejudice him againſt both father and ſon, the latter particularly, whom he thought muſt be ſtrangely deficient in feeling and delicacy, to wiſh to marry a woman, whoſe heart he muſt know was devoted to another, with whom he was almoſt accuſed of having had an intrigue, by her own father.

The poſt horſes by no means kept pace with his impatience; however, he arrived at the caſtle within ſix hours after the Maſter of Requeſts and his ſiſter. As he drove up the avenue, he perceived Mr. de Ceare and another

ther gentleman advancing to meet him; he therefore inſtantly alighted, and approached his father-in-law, who received him very affectionately. The Preſident, who was the other gentleman he had ſeen, now came up, and welcomed him very politely into l'Orleannois.

"I am very happy, my dear d'Elcour," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "you have ſo ſpeedily followed us; I was almoſt afraid you would not have been in time to have aſſiſted at your ſiſter's wedding, but I hope your preſence will increaſe the pleaſure ſhe ought to feel upon ſo joyful an occaſion: your ſiſter, as I wrote you word, is going to be united to this nobleman's only ſon, a match much above my moſt ſanguine hopes in every reſpect."

The Marquis was now convinced the Magiſtrate was bent upon this marriage, notwithſtanding the aſſurances he had given his ſiſter (as ſhe had informed him in the letter ſhe

ſhe left at Paris for him) of never again attempting to force her inclinations, he therefore ſaid, "I think myſelf very fortunate, ſir, in having arrived before the ceremony had taken place; I only hope my ſiſter is as partial to the gentleman you intend ſhe ſhould marry, as you ſeem to be."

"How, Marquis," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "don't you ſuppoſe ſhe muſt feel great pleaſure in having it in her power to oblige me, and at all events, ſhe ought to obey me; and don't you think ſhe is peculiarly fortunate in having captivated a man of the rank and fortune of the Count de St. Blancard, only deſcendant of one of the firſt families in France."

The Marquis was exceſſively hurt, and hardly knew what to ſay, but his diſpleaſure was very viſible.

"I really believe, Marquis," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "if one may judge by your countenance,

tenance, you don't approve of my intentions; perhaps you think the brave Dubois more worthy of the honour of becoming your relation; I know he is, and always was, your beſt friend, but you ſhould recollect his origin, before you let your romantic notions of friendſhip carry you too far."

"I am only ſorry, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, "to find the actions of Dubois, my beſt friend, ſir, (looking proudly at the Maſter of Requeſts, for I glory in my attachment to him) have been ſo groſſly miſrepreſented, as I am convinced they have been."

"Oh, I will allow him all poſſible merit," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "but ſtill I can never allow your ſiſter to become the wife of an Apothecary's ſon: beſides, as I am now perfectly decided with reſpect to the Count de St. Blancard, any objections either ſhe or you may make to my plan, will be of no avail."

D'Elcour,

D'Elcour, more and more hurt, upon finding his father ſo obſtinately bent upon this marriage, reſolved, in his own mind, to prevent it, even at the hazard of his life.

The Maſter of Requeſts, as well as the Preſident, enjoyed his anxiety, which was ſoon to ceaſe, for he was ſo agitated, he could hardly ſpeak to either.

"I perceive now, very plainly, Marquis," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "you think your ſiſter would have preferred Dubois to the ſon of my noble friend here."

"You may inſult me as much as you pleaſe, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, very haughtily, "but I could wiſh you would ſpare my friend, whom I know to be incapable of an ungenerous action; but really, after what has paſſed, ſir, I cannot conceive what induced you to be in ſuch a violent hurry to marry my ſiſter."

" I chuſe to put her under the protection of a huſband," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, " and I am convinced ſhe won't wiſh to run away from the Count de St. Blancard, though ſhe did from me."

" I dare ſay, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, " if my ſiſter marries the Count, he will not have reaſon to repent of his choice; but if real merit, rare talents, and genuine bravery, had any weight in your eyes, I fancy, without intending to offend the Count de St. Blancard, that Dubois would have a greater right to your daughter than he has." He could not help aſſuming a diſdainful air when he pronounced the Count's name, " and I think you cannot have forgot his firſt viſit to St. ***, I believe if he had not arrived there as opportunely as he did, you are convinced you would not now have had a daughter to have beſtowed upon this Count."

The Preſident's eyes gliſtened with joy; he could freely have taken the Marquis in his

his arms, at that moment, ſo much was he flattered by the warmth of the attachment he diſplayed for his darling ſon, and ſo ably did he plead the cauſe of what he conceived to be injured innocence.

" If you, ſir," continued the Marquis, " have forgot the obligations we owe him, I have not, and I think he has conſiderably added to them by his late brave action; excuſe me, ſir, if I explain myſelf too freely, but I am afraid you judge of my ſiſter's heart by your own; you perceive advantages in this match, I am convinced ſhe does not, for never was there a more grateful, or a more generous heart, than her's; ſhe is free from all that pride and ambition, ſo frequently the companion of high birth: ſhe can diſcover merit in the humbleſt garb, and certainly you are not blind to the many eminent qualities that diſtinguiſh my friend. While you ſaw him with unprejudiced eyes, you admired him: oh, ſir, with what plea-

ſure would I change ſituations with him, could he, by that means, obtain your conſent to become your ſon-in-law: 'tis your daughter alone he adores, independant of her birth and riches, and I am confident, were he in my ſiſter's ſituation, and were he as much your ſuperior in every reſpect, as he is now your inferior, he would not heſitate a moment in his choice; his own ſuperior merit led him to diſcover my ſiſter's, and I am certain, had he a coronet to offer, it would be placed upon her head."

The Magiſtrate was exceſſively confuſed by the latter part of the Marquis's diſcourſe, eſpecially as the Preſident's eyes and countenance expreſſed his approbation of it very ſtrongly; and perceiving Mr. de Ceare's embarraſſment, he anſwered the Marquis, ſaying,

"Why really, my young friend, you are an excellent advocate, when you plead the cauſe

cauſe of friendſhip, but I hope, when you are acquainted with my ſon, you will allow him the ſecond place in your eſteem, if you cannot the firſt; I can only aſſure you, he is as incapable of accepting a Lady's hand, without her heart, as from your diſcourſe, I am convinced you are, and both him and myſelf will be highly flattered in being able to claim a relationſhip to the Marquis d'Elcour, through his lovely ſiſter, whoſe merit and accompliſhments we feel as ſtrongly as he can."

The Marquis was half reconciled to the Count de St. Blancard, from his father's ſpeech, though he was ſtill determined to oppoſe the match, if his ſiſter diſliked him, of which he had little doubt; but he now entertained ſome hopes, ſince the young Count poſſeſſed ſuch delicacy, he might be as averſe to the match as his ſiſter, he therefore only returned a ſilent bow to the Preſident's flattering ſpeech, who walking forwards, ſaid,

he would go and announce the Marquis's arrival.

Mr. de Ceare kept rather behind with d'Elcour, and ſlackened his pace, to allow the Preſident time to prepare his ſon to ſee his juvenile friend; the Marquis had very unintentionally made him feel very ſeverely the abſurdity of his late conduct.

The Preſident ſent for his ſon, as has been before mentioned, as ſoon as he arrived at the houſe, to whom he imparted, in a few words, all that had paſſed, and then bid him return into the drawing room, where his mother, Mademoiſelle de Ceare, and all the company were now aſſembled, having heard of the Marquis's arrival; and the Preſident, who was already very partial to d'Elcour, went out to meet him and Mr. de Ceare, who were advancing ſlowly up the lawn.

Mr. de Ceare, while they were tête à tête, had been praiſing his future ſon-in-law very much

much to the Marquis, who only hoped, he ſaid, his ſiſter would be happy, but he owned he ſtill entertained doubts of the Count de St. Blancard's making her ſo.

"But conſider," ſaid the Magiſtrate, "what a fortunate thing for you, your ſiſter's alliance with this noble family will be."

"Really, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, "my ſiſter's happineſs is much dearer to me than my own."

"Your ſentiments are certainly very flattering to me," ſaid Mr. de Ceare, "but I am perſuaded this young Count is the only man in the world to make her compleatly happy."

The Marquis made no anſwer, determined to be convinced of that before he would give up the point.

The

The Preſident now joined them, and they all three walked into the houſe together. As ſoon as the drawing room door opened, Mademoiſelle de Ceare ran to meet her brother, whom ſhe received with the greateſt joy and affection, and he was ſo happy to ſee her, though the room was full of company, for ſome moments he could only perceive her lovely ſelf; her animated countenance and apparent gaiety ſurpriſed him very much; what would he have given to have been alone with her juſt then, had it been only for a few minutes.

While he was trying to read her ſentiments in her eyes, if poſſible, and before he had taken a ſecond look round him, the Preſident took his ſon by the arm, who was all impatience to embrace his dear friend, and led him to the Marquis,

"Allow me, Marquis, to introduce your future brother-in-law, the Count de St. Blancard."

The

The Marquis turned round, and was preparing to make a very formal bow to his intended relation, when the ſight of his dear Dubois, who was now ſtanding before him, almoſt petrified him; he ſtood motionleſs, gazing at the Count, without being able to believe his eyes, nor hardly certain it was him, he was ſo much dreſſed, doubtful whether it was really the friend of his infancy, 'till unable to ſuppreſs his feelings, the Count ruſhed into his arms, which mechanically opened to receive him.

"My dear Marquis, how happy your arrival has made us all; I ſee you hardly know your old friend, but we will explain that matter by and bye; only promiſe to transfer the friendſhip you honoured Dubois with, to the happy St. Blancard, and you will add greatly to his felicity."

The Marquis, ſtill in amaze, preſſed his friend to his heart, without ſpeaking, and looking

looking round him, perceived Rhubarbin, who advanced to welcome him in great ſpirits.

At laſt, having rather recovered from his ſurpriſe, he began to laugh as well as the reſt of the company, who had been highly amuſed by his aſtoniſhment, and who knew from whence it proceeded.

"Upon my ſoul," ſaid he, "I am at a loſs to comprehend what all this means—am I really awake?" again looking round him, and feeling himſelf, which redoubled the mirth of the company; "I was invited to a caſtle, and I think it is either haunted or enchanted; but I am exceedingly happy I am among ſo many of my beſt friends; I ſee you all enjoy my ſurpiſe, ſo do pray, my dear friend," addreſſing the Count, "whatever your name is, let us take a little walk together, for I am all impatience to clear up this myſtery."

Mr.

Mr. de Ceare ſaid, "inſtead of walking, he had better go and alter his dreſs, as he was quite in diſhabille, from having travelled all night."

"That was very true," he ſaid, making an apology to the company, for having appeared before them in ſuch an undreſs.

He then walked out with the Count, who conducted him into a dreſſing room, and after again expreſſing their joy at meeting thus unexpectedly, the Count informed the Marquis all he wiſhed to know, while he was at his toilet; as the diſcourſe paſſed in Italian, which they both ſpoke very fluently, the valet's preſence was no interruption to them.

The Marquis told his friend, the animoſity and diſlike he felt for the Count de St. Blancard, when he arrived, and was delighted to find what he had foretold Mr. de Ceare was come

come to paſs; nothing could have made him ſo happy, as the thoughts of having his friend Dubois for a brother-in-law; but we may ſuppoſe, as matters now ſtood, his joy was increaſed.

He hoped the Count intended to enter into the ſervice immediately, for every great man, according to the Marquis's way of thinking, ought to be a ſoldier; indeed it was the prevalent faſhion in France.

The Count ſmiled at his friend's eagerneſs, and told him his father's intentions, which accorded with his own inclinations, for being bred a Phyſician, I ſhould make a poor ſoldier, except I was to become ſurgeon to your regiment, a poſt I am not ambitious of ſhining in, therefore, you ſhall be a General, Marquis, but let me remain contented in the ſphere I am ſo unexpectedly raiſed to.

"Oh, I like your humility," ſaid the Marquis, laughing, "humbly content to figure

figure as firſt Preſident des Tournelles, really you make vaſt efforts; if ever I ſhou'd have a law ſuit, remember I beſpeak your protection."

"I am afraid, in that caſe, I ſhall be what my father allows he was, a Prejudiced Judge."

Dinner broke off their converſation, and the Marquis having compleated his toilet, joined the company with his friend, and their appearance added to the gaiety of the party.

After dinner, Rhubarbin's marriage was the ſubject of converſation, and the Count introduced the Marquis to the bride elect; it was ſettled their nuptials ſhould be celebrated next morning, as every thing was in readineſs, and the Count's wedding was fixed for that day week. There did not want many preparations, as Mademoiſelle de Ceare's clothes were all made a few months before, and the

Preſident had prepared every thing for the Count.

When theſe two important points were ſettled, Mr. de Ceare, after telling the Marquis he ſhould never forget the proper leſſon he had given him in the morning, which he felt all the ſtrength of, aſked him if he had not yet ſeen a Lady upon his travels, or before he left Paris, he ſhould like to marry.

"Oh really, ſir," ſaid the Marquis, "a ſoldier is not in want of a wife."

Mr. de Ceare underſtood his meaning, knowing he was totally dependant upon him.

"Well, but my dear D'Elcour," ſaid the Magiſtrate, "as I have no ſon to provide for but yourſelf now; and as your generous friend, you have ſuch reaſon to be proud of, will only accept a very moderate ſum with my

my daughter, on your account, and for fear I ſhould ever be tempted to be offended with you, and do that in a moment of paſſion, I ſhould ever after repent, I will make you perfectly independant of me the moment I return to Paris, and at my death, you and my daughter ſhall divide what remains; therefore, whenever it ſuits you, (and depend upon my approbation following your choice) why e'en marry."

"A wife is a very neceſſary appendage in the ſuit of a man of faſhion, let him be in the army or not, and as neceſſary to his felicity," ſaid the Count."

"My ſon adopts my ſentiments," ſaid the Preſident, "for I affirm it, a bachelor's life is, of all others, the moſt inſupportable."

The Marquis thanked the Magiſtrate very politely for his kind intentions, adding, as for his friend and brother, he had laid him

under obligations from the time he was firſt acquainted with him, and as he could never repay him, he muſt only ſtrive to deſerve the continuance of that friendſhip, which was become neceſſary to his exiſtence; for I am certain, if ever I marry, my brother and ſiſter will rival my wife in my heart, and he knew of no Lady, at preſent, who would accept his hand upon ſuch terms; but if either his father or the Preſident could point out any amiable woman, likely to make him half as happy as his dear friend and ſiſter would be, he would try his ſkill in the art of courtſhip.

They all laughed, and the Preſident and Mr. de Ceare promiſed they would ſoon find him employment in that way.

The nuptials were celebrated at the appointed time, and ſoon after the Preſident reſigned his charge in favour of his ſon, though he would not part with either him or his

wife, ſo they occupied the beſt part of his Hotel at Paris, and always ſpent the ſummer at one of his ſeats, the choice of which was left to them, as the late Preſident, now Marquis de Ranſal, and his Lady, were too fond of them, not to think their company all that was wanting to their happineſs.

The Marquis D'Elcour continued to reſide with Mr. de Ceare, and married a moſt amiable woman about twelve months after his friend had married his ſiſter.

Rhubarbin lived to a good old age, reſpected as much by the young Preſident as he ever was by Dubois; he left off buſineſs, and retired with his wife to the Caſtle of St. Blancard, by deſire of its noble owner, which was near Montpellier, and where the Preſident often viſited them during the ſummer, and always profeſſed the greateſt filial attachment for the Apothecary.

Having

Having now brought our hiſtory to a concluſion, the tranſlator merely hopes this ſlight ſpecimen of the late laws and cuſtoms in France, will not prove unacceptable to thoſe who may peruſe theſe volumes.

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